

## The impact of cultures on customer service

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## Abstract

It is undeniable that planet earth has experienced an evolution over the years with globalization and technology. Therefore, this has affected the way companies do business and the way customers consume. In effect, one of the main objective of firms nowadays is to be able of selling their services all around the world. In order to make that possible, companies have to work in unknown territories with new rules, new languages, new habits and new cultures. Internationalization has been a revolution in every aspect, however, it has not change how culture is part of an individual identity and how a person is influenced by culture when making a purchase decision.

Moreover, this is the reason why firms normally try to adapt their customer service wherever they offer services. Thanks to the analysis of a questionnaire's results, we have an idea on how customer service is perceived as divergent in two different countries. Hence, this confirms that each culture is unique and companies need to be aware of that in order to improve their customer service in the several market where they are located.

Finally, everything goes back to the same: people want to be treated as individuals and not as mass consumers. Is that said, organizations should propose a customer service more personalized than standardized.

Keywords: Customer service, Cultures, Adaptation and Internationalization.

JEL- F23: Multinational firms; International Business

JEL- Z19: Cultural Economics

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## Resumo

É inegável que o planeta Terra experimentou uma evolução ao longo dos anos com a globalização e a tecnologia. Portanto, isso afetou a forma como as empresas fazem negócios e a forma como os consumidores consomem. Desta forma, um dos principais objetivos das empresas hoje em dia é poder vender os seus serviços em todo o mundo. Para que isso seja possível, as empresas devem trabalhar em territórios desconhecidos com novas regras, novas línguas, novos hábitos e novas culturas. A internacionalização tem sido uma revolução em todos os aspectos, no entanto, não alterou a forma como a cultura é parte de uma identidade individual e como uma pessoa é influenciada pela cultura ao tomar uma decisão de compra.

Além disso, esse é o motivo pelo qual as empresas normalmente tentam adaptar o seu serviço ao cliente. Graças à análise dos resultados de um questionário, temos uma ideia sobre como o atendimento ao cliente é diferente em cada país. Por isso, isso confirma que cada cultura é única e as empresas precisam estar cientes disso para melhorar o atendimento ao cliente nos diversos mercados onde estão localizados.

Finalmente, tudo se volta ao mesmo: as pessoas querem ser tratadas como consumidor individual e não como consumidores em massa. Dito isto, as organizações devem propor um serviço ao cliente mais personalizado do que o padronizado.

Palavras- Chaves: Atendimento ao cliente, Culturas, Adaptação e internacionalização.

JEL-F23: Empresas multinacionais; Negócios internacionais

JEL-Z19: Economia Cultural

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## 1. Introduction

This dissertation's purpose is to explain and discuss the impact of cultures on the customer service.

First of all, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century globalization became a revolution as a consequence of the industrialization and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cultural globalization was one of the biggest movement because it was more than standardize production with economies of scale, it was about sharing customs, habits, ideas, values from one country to another in order to promote social relationship. Nowadays, those trends have been criticized by clients that have become more and more exigent and have forced multinationals to adapt to every culture and personalize some of their standardized services. In effect, the customer service is one of the most important elements in the service industry in order for companies to sell. As Walton (2014) once said: *“The goal as a company is to have customer service that is not just the best but legendary”* (p.1). Moreover, firms have experienced a higher demand from customers that want personalized customer service all around the globe because technology has taken a big part of the human contact.

Second of all, each culture is unique and cannot be standardized in any form even though there is a massive production all over the world in order to sell as much as possible and put everyone in the same basket.

The first part is about the theory and is going to be divided in two parts (II and III). On the one hand, the history about the service industry is going to be explained, with a sub-part (I-A) about its beginning with the initial trends and another sub-part (I-B) with the new trends in order to have an idea about the evolution of it. On the other hand, main definitions about the topic will be exposed, first the basic concepts such as the services, customer-service or the industry (II-A) and then the culture and the influence of it in the customer-service (II-B).

The second part (IV) will be divided in three sub-parts, the first one (A) will introduce the different type of research and explain the one that will be used, the second (B) will expose the results obtained with the survey and the third (C) will be the analysis of data recollected and help of the graphics.

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## 2. History of the service industry

### 1) The beginning of services

It was registered that during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century the service industry grew speedily in the United States economy and it was most perceived in the employment rise than in the amount produced by the industry.

Table 1- Percent distribution of output and employment between the goods and services sector from 1959-81

(Source: Kutscher and Mark, 1983)

Item	1959	1959	1973	1979	1981
<b>Output<sup>1</sup></b>					
Total private .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goods-producing .....	41.4	43.0	39.6	36.7	35.4
Service-producing .....	58.6	63.0	60.4	63.3	64.6
<b>Employment<sup>2</sup></b>					
Total nonagricultural .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goods-producing sector .....	38.3	34.6	32.4	29.5	28.0
Service-producing sector .....	61.7	65.4	67.6	70.5	72.0
Public .....	15.2	17.3	17.9	17.8	17.6
Private .....	46.0	43.1	49.7	52.8	54.4
"Other services" .....	13.3	15.9	16.7	19.1	20.4

<sup>1</sup> Data are from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce. The specific measure is "gross product originating" in (or net output of) each of the sectors.  
<sup>2</sup> Data relate to numbers of wage and salary workers in the nonagricultural economy, as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics survey.

The secondary sector increased its employment at an average rate of 1.0% annually compared to the service sector with 3.2% between 1960 and 1981. Also, "other services" such as medical services, hotels or business had an average increase of 4.4% per year during that same period of time. However, there are some industries within the service sector that had not experienced the same expansion, like the public utilities, railroad transportation or barbers for example. In general, the service sector represented 17 of 30 most labor-intensive industries in the American economy in 1981.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the internet was a technical revolution (World Wide Web) that allowed services business to grow speedily. In fact, it gave a marketing opportunity for companies to advertise their products, propose online shopping or electronic banking facilities.

In 2012, the service industry in the United States included about 340,000 business with about 580 billion dollars. This sector is extremely divided with the 50 largest firms account for less than 25% of the industry gain. USA and Europe are the world's largest business services



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markets with for example, Adecco which is a staffing firm (Switzerland); Veolia Environment for waste and remediation services (France); G4S for security services (UK); TUI Travel for travel agency (UK); and Serco Group for facilities support services (UK). Furthermore, most of the companies in this sector contribute with support services to all type of industries' businesses and, sometimes to households (office administration, hiring and placing of personnel, travel planning, cleaning or waste disposal). The economies of scale are an advantage for big companies in order to compete globally or within a specific region whereas small ones are more focused on high customization (customer loyalty). The sector is labor-intensive with about 80,000 dollars of revenue per employee per year. Also, China, India and Latin America are emerging markets with the highest growth rates. This sector engender about 280 billion dollars of gain per year and by 2015 it could go up to 320 billion dollars, according to Global Industry Analysts. The two countries that accounts for 20% of global staffing services gain are: USA and Japan and for 15% is the UK. Overall, Europe is the largest regional staffing services market. The top ten firms account for about a third of industry sales (Industry report, 2012).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century the business service sector has rapidly grown in terms of employment and value added. In fact, Europe is one of the largest economic sector, more than communication, transport, hotels and restaurants all together with a growth of 4.4%. Between 1979 and 2003 it was the most productive sector after telecommunications with a growth rate of value-added of 4.2% per year. However, the United States' service productivity was stronger than Europe. Moreover, the service industry had a positive influence towards high education compared to other industries like manufacturing for instance. In addition, 11% of the employment and 12% of the value added account for the total of EU 15 economy. Between 1790 and 2003 the business service sector accounted for more than half of the EU's net employment growth. The growth of the business service sector has been caused by outsourcing of existing in-house services jobs from other industries to this one, between 1980s and the early 1990s (sub-sectors that produce standardized business services). Nevertheless in the mid-1990s, there was a change in the social division of labor because several knowledge intensive and non-routine services tasks where elected for outsourcing to independent services companies. Furthermore, the innovation of products generated changes in the nature of services. Therefore, this sector is less affected to cyclical fluctuations than others which make it a resource in time of economic crisis (Kox and Rubalcada, 2007).

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An evolution has been witness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when manufacturing companies were looking to switch from where they were to the service industry and the R&D (research and development) in order to keep up with the economy. The output from private and service-producing industries made in 2002 almost two third of the gross domestic product of USA (US Department of commerce report). The technology within the service sector was in rapid expansion as well as the own industry was because of three following demands by businesses:

- Focus on the core: firms needed to hire qualified personnel (top performing workers), however, they only focus on the staff core capabilities and functions instead of dedicating time to add value, create deep expertise and avoid outsourcing.
- Create new channels: were needed for information, raw materials, goods and the creation of additional services such as internet-enabled marketplaces, supply aggregation and pure content provision.
- Move faster: because the capital markets offered high valuations and access to new capital in firms that were able to move rapidly building capabilities, capturing market share and establishing growth (Hays and Riggs, 2002).

Companies are looking for a way to offer their services all around the world and transformational relationships are an advantage in order to share risks and at the same time gain flexibility and business transformation (Kedia and Lahiri, 2007). It is essential that multinationals understand and adapt to their client's needs in order to maintain a long-term relationship with them, which is why Genpact created a "virtual captive" model that allows to provide the client with dedicated leadership, infrastructure and employees who are trained in that client's culture. Each country and city has its own culture as well as clients' have their own that is why companies are searching and adapting to local culture and be part of the evolution in order to get closer to their clients (Sharma and Loh, 2009).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century customers already wanted personalized services even though the efficiency and predictability of the standardized services was a more common way. According to Czepiel et al. (1985) "*personalized services*" are any behaviors occurring in the interaction intended to contribute to the individuation of the customer. Recognize the customer uniqueness as an individual over and above his/her status as an anonymous service recipient (p. 87). Nevertheless, there are different types of interpretations about its real signification. Furthermore, it goes both ways since the customization it's expensive, companies also want a "good customer". Personalization varies depending on the nature of the service being delivered,

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behaviors in the role script and the strategy implemented. Therefore, three dimensions are been highlight by Parasuraman et al. (1984):

- Courtesy: politeness and friendliness (from formal to personal level).
- Communication: give information to the customer in a language he/she understands.
- Understand: need to learn the needs of customers and provide individual attention.

Moreover, there are two types of personalization strategies that can be applied. On the one hand, the outcome personalization with the option personalization (different type of services that you can choose: which gives the costumer control). On the other hand, the process personalization with programmed personalization: give the impression with small talk, using customers' names (embellishment of routinized actions with personal referents). For simple services, the customer must expend more cognitive effort: increases costs (it does not increase satisfaction). Or the customized personalization: assist the customer in attaining the best possible form of the service offering for his/her needs (increases cognitive effort and decreases predictability juts like programmed). However, combined with option personalization it boosts the consumer's confidence that they have taken the best alternative: real estate brokers, tax consultants, physicians, therapists.... If option personalization is low, the customized personalization will have positive effects on provider evaluations and if option personalization is high, the customized personalization will have positive effects on both service provider evaluations and satisfaction (Surprenant and Solomon, 1987).

## 2) The new trends

At the beginning on the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new expression was in order "act globally, think locally", companies had to adapt to cultural, legal and technical issues of each country where they wanted to be established. Most of the firms' confrontations were to deal with the service's consistency, the consent with foreign-government regulations, cultural and languages contrasts (Violino, 2004).

Many companies did not understand the crucial need of having an excellent customer service in order to grow their customer relationships due to the increment of the technology's availability and failed results. Therefore in 2015, customer-service became a priority within the top ten trends and goals. First of all, globalization and the internet have allowed firms to deliver services cost effectively, on a virtual basis, whenever and wherever they want, without any boundaries. Second, smart technology gives access to a customer service at any time during

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the whole year. Third, the amount of data that can be saved has given the possibility to identify trends and opportunities for the profit of the company. Fourth, the cloud is a tool that organizations use to avoid problems with hardware, storage and software. Fifth, firms have to adjust their management to millennials customer and employees. Sixth, companies have to meet the needs of their customer if they want to survive. Seventh, the protection of a company's assets such as people, data, and physical premises are compulsory. Eighth, healthcare services are one of the most important. Ninth, global warming, climate changes and the protection of the environment have to be taking into account in the main goals of social responsiveness of firms. Finally the urbanization is constantly changing and uneducated workforce is increasing which allows companies to reduce their operating costs (Fluss, 2015).

Companies have been forced to change their management habits and send employees to several destinations of the world in order to rotate, learn about other cultures and work with people that come from different international backgrounds. It is clear that each country and even each city has its own culture, practices, customs, habits and regulations that make firms adapt internally in order to have a better knowledge on how to grow globally (Harps, 2000).

Top companies invest in customer experience such as Apple for instance, which is considered as the best-in-class customer experience that connects the customer life cycle. The purpose it is not anymore handling a mass market but instead, managing relationships. Thus, strategies, customer data, marketing messages, business proposition, employees, processes, technology, governance, and metrics contribute to the performance management. However, the customer is the key to deliver the best experience ever. Companies need to analyze information in order to understand what do the customer wants, needs, prefers, expects and is part of his lifestyle which in order words also means his culture (Rich, 2009).

During the years firms realized that the customer was the principal objective as Levitt (1960) said "*customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of any business*" (p.792).

Therefore, organizational changes were made such as deleting buffers and in 1990 half of the employees had a direct contact with customer bringing quality and customer service, in nearly a quarter of Fortune 1000 firms. Then, customers were starting to be considered as stakeholders (Grant, Shani, & Krishnan, 1994; Schuler & Harris, 1992). Third, the wants and needs of customers became essential which made them have higher expectations and experiences (sophistication and knowledge) (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). In addition, as the customer' know-how rises, he/she helped contribute to the activities' production and start to

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become a co-producer (Bowen & Schneider, 1988; Cardozo, 1965; Chase & Garvin, 1989; Mills, Chase, & Margulies, 1983).

A customer has different types of roles:

- Resource:

According to DeGreene (1973) resources are defined as: “*as physical, informational, and/or intangible raw materials provided for use in transformation or production processes*” (p. 797).

Thus, the customer can provide certain characteristic like knowledge, natural resources, capital or any concrete or intangible that will contribute to the activities’ production.

- Co-producer:

The customer is considered as a “worker” where he/she influences on the quality results of a firm activity through information, influence and feedback.

- Buyer:

Potential customers have to be transformed into actual ones because potential customers are more reliable and will always prefer to buy your product or service first if they will have a good return on their investment. Also, if they do not have any information about a company they will rely on its image or reputation.

- Beneficiary:

The customer is the first one to beneficiate and use goods or services which are why they measure their expectations with the result obtained helping the improvement of customer satisfaction and creating relationships with an organization which will increase the whole competitive quality of the system.

Consequently, globalization has change the rules of how customer satisfaction is perceived all over the world thanks to global movements, for example in 2010 there were about 214 million international migrants and 980 million international tourist arrivals all over the world. Those tourists generated about 919 billion US dollars earnings (World Tourism Organization, 2012). As a result, multicultural encounters have increased over the years and have help contribute to adaptation as well as proof of the importance people give to their own culture.

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Globalization exists since centuries ago however, its contemporary phase started after World War II and has been growing during these last two decades. According to several authors such as Appadurai (1996), Pieterse (2004) and Prasad (2006), globalization is perceived as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that englobes economic aspects, cultural, ideological, political demographic and other elements.

This phenomenon has created two types of global cultures: the common and the diverse one. On the one hand, it has helped spread several major religions all over the world, the transmission of the numeric system from India to the Arab world, the increase of technology innovations (transport, communications...) or the development in politics and ideologies. This has been called the popular culture based on the "Americanization" where Western products/ services have been implemented in different cultures. This is manifested through fast-food (McDonald's), music (Rihanna), television shows (MTV), newspapers (New York Times), satellite broadcast (DirecTV), clothing (Nike) and so on. Cultural imperialism is when one culture has more power and is reshaping cultural values, identities and perceptions. This is clearly influenced by richer economies that are controlling third world countries.

On the other hand, cultures will never be able to mix and be one because it is in their nature to be different. Thanks to globalization cultural interactions have increase tolerance and diversity. Ideas, values, practices habits are unique in each culture which is why they will foment a multicultural exchange across the world. According to the UNESCO (2001) "*cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity*" (p.24). There is diversity everywhere, in a country, in a city, in a society, in a family or even in one person which is bringing new cultural goods with each generation. This has to be integrated as a benefit as a source of creativity, innovation, adaptation and exchange that is part of the uniqueness of humankind.

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### 3. Definition of the concepts

#### 1) The world of services

First of all, to understand about what the topic is referring to, we need to explain part by part what it means.

According to Grönroos (2001) a service is “*an activity or series of activities of a more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in the interaction between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or good and/or systems of the services provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems*” (p. 110).

Therefore, this definition focuses on three important concepts which are the activities (the object of exchange), the interactions (between two people and not for the physical products) and solutions to customer problems.

Moreover, one of the principal objectives of a service is to give the customer the best quality attention in order for him to come back to the company. It is essential to create value and foster his loyalty as Gustafsson and Johnson (2003) said: “*the service organization should create a seamless system of linked activities that solves the customer’s problems or provides unique experiences*” (p. 111).

The customer is king, this expression was not invented for nothing, a company needs to understand what its customer wants and how he wants it because each customer is going to have its own perspective of the service provided, so you might as well do it better than others in order to guaranty success. In fact, three key words that often come to define the process nature of services are performance, processes and deeds.

Nevertheless, services in plural do not have the same meaning as service in singular which is more about the satisfaction of the customer needs and wants. Providing a service it is more about the experience and creation of value whereas offering services it is related to something you can give to the customer, it seems more “tangible”, even though is not.

There are four characteristics that describe the concept of service according to Zeithaml et al. (1985), which are the following:

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- Intangibility:

It represents the activities and the not physical objects that cannot be seen, touched, tasted or smelled unlike the goods that are purchased. However, some services can be perceived as standardized through IT for example with the telecommunications, or tangible through goods such as ATMs. In fact, Bitner (1992) developed the concept of “servicescape”, “*which is a framework for describing the role of the physical aspects of the environment in which services are produced and experienced by customers*” (p. 114). Furthermore, he highlights that marketing (publicity, packaging...) of a service has allowed the customer to have a better image of it thanks to key elements that enable differentiation and facilitate the consumer’s behavior. The goal is to make “*something tangible from the customer’s perspective, such as new knowledge, a memorable experience or related to possessions*” (p.115).

Therefore, services have to be unique and not heterogeneous, as are interactive and labor-intensive services which is why Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) thus concluded that “[I]t is inappropriate to continue to generalize about heterogeneity (or variability) as being a distinct characteristic that sets all services apart from all goods” (p.114). If companies want their clients to be loyal, a non-standardization would be necessary (heterogeneity) in order to create value whereas standardization may have a negative influence on it.

- Inseparability:

Since a service has to be verified by quality assurance and quality control, the production and consumption cannot be separated. Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) talked about oversimplification because the majority of services are produced regardless of the customer such as car repair, information and financial services or goods transportation. Thus, production and consumption cannot be simultaneous because service “*is produced, delivered, and consumed, but the favorable (or unfavorable) customer experience is stored*” (p.114). Also, the service provided to a customer will be always be kept in his memory which is why Gummesson (2000) said: the hotel is a “*store of rooms*” (p.114). Therefore, there is a long term storage that influences that perspective of service quality and the customer future behavior towards it.

- Heterogeneity (or non-standardization):

Nowadays with globalization, goods and services have been standardized in order to have a homogeneity and control over it. However, it has a negative influence on value creation



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because consumers want a personalized service and human contact, which is why it is important to be focused on co-production and co-creation. The customer performs as a co-producer which helps the customization. Furthermore, the services tend to be heterogeneous in two types of situation because of:

1. The person providing the service and its processes.
2. The variation of a company's production according to each employee and among customers depending on their needs and expectations.

Therefore, each person is unique and has its own way of thinking and doing that is why *"consistency may vary over time as a result of "service role ambiguity"*.

- Perishability (or exclusion from the inventory):

The capacity of services cannot be stored which means that the activity from the producer's perspective such as a place at a cinema or a seat on a bus does not last. Nevertheless, if the focus changes towards the customer perspective, a difference can be found. Perishability is related to services but also to managerial problems present in manufacturing companies and goods. Thus, the customer perspective has to become the number one priority in order to develop positive memorable experiences. One of the biggest issue is that services are not directly perceptible because people are unpredictable as consumers and every exchange with a service producer will be an experiment. Therefore, companies can influence the purchase of a service with several tools.

Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos said (2005): *"In both theory and in practice, marketers have recognized that the fundamental, qualitative differences between goods and services, in addition to requiring special management paradigms, may elicit distinctive behavior from customers"* (p.115).

The service sector does not produce any raw material nor products, on the contrary, it provides services directly to the final consumer or indirectly like for example: doctors or banks.

In addition, Silvestro and Johnston (1990) said that the service sector is the one that *"do[es]things for you. They don't make things"* (p. 206). In fact, several types of activities have been developing along bureaucratic lines in this industry that are a bit different from its origin but they contribute to the needs of the society. For instance, there is the health care service and the public services (social services, transportation, education, electricity...).

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Bowen and Schneider (1988) expressed an important point regarding the service processes because it is hard to measure their results which is why it is primordial to define their inputs, outputs and the substance upon which they act: *"Service operations depend on the customer to provide the information that is the raw material to be transformed into the service output"* (p. 48). Moreover, Lyth and Johnston, 1988, said that *"one segment of the service sector, the customer processing operation ... [which] acts upon the customer who enters the system, is the recipient, and possibly the participant of some kind of service and is the output of the system"* (p. 1268).

Furthermore, it exists a difference between the word consumer that comes from a manufacturing point of view and customer that comes from a service point of view. That is to say services are linked to interpersonal connotation, which is why Evans and Brown (1988) make a differentiation between two types of service delivery systems:

- "operations-intensive" that offers a standardized service to a mass market like for example: fast food operations.
- "interpersonal-intensive" that is more related to the relational view of the market, for example: Starbucks.

The main objective for the service staff is to deliver core services and promote customer satisfaction and loyalty with their interpersonal interaction. Thus, Bowen and Schneider (1988) explained that *"service firms need to create and sustain cultures that enhance employee attachment to organizational service goals"* (p. 63) Moreover, service companies provide a variety of functions to their front-line personnel that are defined by Bowen and Schneider (1988): *"Service employees in service encounters are said to function as a "service trinity": they run the service operation, market the service, and are equated by customers with the service"* (p.64). Gummesson (1991) called them "part-time marketers" because they are the one promoting the image of the service organization.

The customer point of view is crucial for the success of a service business as Chadee and Mattsson (1996) noted: *"We have reason to believe that the entire service encounter is evaluated by the customer and not just the interaction with the service provider"* (p. 306). At the end of the day, the customer is looking for a profit in a service and if he is not satisfied, he will let the company know. Johns and Howard (1998) suggested *"that tangible aspects of the meal experience may have a similar semiotic role in customers' assessment of restaurant*

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*service*” (p. 306). Therefore, in order for the customer to have a memorable experience, the service provider competence has to be high and in the best case scenario, there is a win-win situation where both the customer and the front-line crew are satisfied (Brown et al., 1990). Nevertheless, according to Nikolich and Sparks (1995): *“Perceived control of the service encounter is a commodity which is desired by both the customer and the service provider ... Indeed customers see the traditional method of receiving service as offering less control and self-service as offering more control”* (p.45).

Kutscher and Mark (1983) described the service sector as it: *“encompasses all industries except those in the goods-producing sector- agriculture, mining, construction, and manufacturing. Under this definition, services include transportation, communication, public utilities, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, other personal and business services and government”* (p.21).

Customer-service has been created to provide assistance to people that buy or use products or services. In this case, customer-service creates an attachment with the service worker, the place and the brand thanks to interpersonal relationships. Bowlby (1977), considered as the first attachment theorist, defines attachment as *“the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others”* (p.342).

Therefore, the customer is an essential key that allows the contact with the service-provider and the delivery of the services and according to Vargo and Lusch, (2004); Gummesson et al. (2010): *“the customer is a proactive co-creator rather than as passive receiver of value”* (p.342). Moreover, Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) said that it exists a place attachment when an *“affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place”* (p.342).

Bitner (1992) talks about “service escapes” referring to the strong bond created with the customer through sensory experiences that generates emotions: the sight (forms and color), the hearing (melodies), the smell (scent), and/or the taste (sweetness). Thus, there is also a brand attachment, Park and MacInnis (2006) *“a relationship- based construct that reflects the emotional bond connecting an individual with a brand”* (p.342).

There are five potential antecedents that can be used to improve and enrich customers' attachment to their service companies:

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Table 2- Potential antecedents of the CSFA construct

(Source: Moussa and Mourad, 2013)

Construct	Author	Definition
Customer satisfaction	Oliver (2010, p. 8)	Satisfaction "is a judgment that a product/ service feature, or the product or service itself, provides (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment"
Emotion	Bagozzi <i>et al.</i> (1999, p. 184)	An emotion is a "mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or one's own thoughts"
Trust	Morgan and Hunt (1994, p. 23)	Trust is the "confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity"
Image congruence	Kleijnen <i>et al.</i> (2005, p. 345)	Image congruence is "the fit between the self-image and the service [firm] image"
Service quality	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> (1988, p. 15)	"Perceived quality is the consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority"

In order to develop a customer service firm attachment between the customer and the business service there are several steps to follow. For instance, when the customer service is high, the customer service firm attachment is to, as Thomson *et al.* (2005) said "*an individual who is emotionally attached to a brand is likely to be satisfied with it*" (p.345). Service quality it is also crucial and Parasuraman *et al.* (1988, 1994) selected the main elements: reliability, responsiveness, assurances, empathy, and tangibles<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, Park *et al.* (2006) said that trust is another component that influences the level of Customer Service Firm Attachment (CSFA) because "*attachment cannot survive without trust*" (p.346). There will be no affectionate bond if the service staff is untrustworthy.

The purchase of a service is thought (except for self-service) because the process depends in part on the interpersonal interaction between the service personnel and the customer. It also has to be consistent with a research stream that distinguishes between customer-staff trust and customer-firm trust (Crutchfield, 2007; Yim *et al.*, 2008). A high level of image congruence leads to a higher level of CSFA because as Sirgy, 1982 and Sirgy *et al.* (1997) exposed "*customer-service firm image congruence as the fit or the match between the self-image and the service firm image*" (p.346). Kutscher and Mark (1983) explained that "*many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption and the renewal of attachment relationships*" (p.347) which means that if during a service experience a customer has a good feeling about it, the CSFA will be higher. Also, depending on what context a service is provided, it will be more relational (high customer contact-not standardized) or on the contrary, transactional (low customer contact-mass market). To finish, a customer will be

<sup>1</sup> SERVQUAL: model to measure and manage the service quality

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more pleased if “*the moderating role of relationship length in the formation of such relational constructs as trust (Coulter and Coulter, 2002) and commitment (Dagger et al., 2009), the length of the relationship is also here expected to moderate the formation of CSFA*” (p.349).

The next table will define the business services within the producer services, Kox and Rubalcada (2007):

Table 3- Definition of the producer services

(Source: Kox and Rubalcaba, 2007)

<i>Producer Services</i>	<i>Business-related services</i>	<i>Business services</i>	<i>Knowledge intensive- business services (K.I.B.S.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Software and computer services</li> <li>* Strategy and management consultancy</li> <li>* Auditing, accountancy, tax and legal advise</li> <li>* Marketing services, opinion polling</li> <li>* Technical services, engineering</li> <li>* Personnel training, headhunting</li> </ul>
			<i>Operational business services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Security services</li> <li>* Equipment renting</li> <li>* Facility management, cleaning</li> <li>* Administration, bookkeeping</li> <li>* Temporary labour recruitment</li> <li>* Other operational services (e.g. catering, translation, call centres)</li> </ul>
		<i>Network-intensive services</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Wholesale, export, import services</li> <li>* Transport and logistics</li> <li>* Banking, insurance, stock exchange</li> <li>* Telecommunication, couriers, cable services</li> <li>* Energy services</li> </ul>
<i>Consumer services partly used by enterprises like business travel, company health services, social insurance services</i>				

## 2) Culture and customer satisfaction

The notion of culture appeared in 1920’s as an anthropologic concept. Nowadays, it is known as dynamic because it changes with human evolution and it includes a wide range of cultural traits like social customs, psychological attitudes, religion, daily habits, technology, values, labor systems, politics or symbolic codes and more (Mogues, 1921).

Moreover, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century culture has been applied to companies which are why culture has an essential influence on how customer-service is provided by companies. It is defined by Awal, Klingler, Rongione and Stumpf (2006) as “*the set of shared values, shared beliefs, and customary ways of thinking and doing things which shape and guide the behavior of organizational members*”, (p.79). In addition, customers’ needs and wants are mostly dominated by their own culture which makes firms adapt to their culture in order to get customer satisfaction. On the one hand, there is the organizational culture that is created within a company to serve one purpose which is the company success. On the other hand, the main

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focuses in this case are the distinct cultures that can be found around the world that make multinationals adjust to obtain customer satisfaction. Moreover, according to Hofstede (1994) culture is a "*collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from those of another*" (p. 357). Therefore, in multicultural environments there is a difference between culture, subculture and buyer behavior because within a society, each individual has its values, lifestyles and personality that forms a culture. Thus, Hofstede (1991) defined five main cultural dimensions that have been taken into account in the service industry in order for service firm to adapt to those cultural differences:

First, power distance dimension shows "*the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally*" (p.359). In addition, there is a discrepancy between the behaviors of powerful customers and fragile ones toward services in large power distance culture. Therefore, powerful customers feel superior than service companies and await to receive an excellent treat with a fast and good response and demonstration of reliability and empathy as Mattila (1999) said "*in cultures characterized by large power distance, the lower status of service employees requires them to provide customers with a high level of service*" (p. 359). On the contrary, it is the opposite for cultures with a low power distance.

Second, in an individualistic culture people tend to only look after themselves and their closest family and are more autonomous and egocentric than people in collectivistic culture. Hence, an individualistic person expects his or her entourage to be competent and is more exigent than a person in collectivistic cultures. In effect, this situation is reflected in cultures with high degree of individualism where the customer is self-confident and donnot need reassurance from the service provider whereas in a collectivistic culture the customer needs to be reassured.

Third, males are supposed to be the strong, thought and the financial sustainability of the family whereas females are the sweet, gentle ones, that take care of the house and/or the children (concerned about quality of life). This image has a repercussion on how a man will provide a more professional, devoted and responsive customer-service whether a women will be more friendly with the customers (masculinity vs feminism). This applies as well on how male and female perceive and evaluate service and customer service.

Forth, according to Hofstede (1991) "*uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations*" (p.360). In effect, there is a distinction between a usual (mall) and unusual (hospital) service provider. Is that said, in

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cultures where the uncertainty avoidance is low, customers' perceptions of quality are not affected by service situations. On the contrary, in cultures where the uncertainty avoidance is high, frequent service situations have to be managing with rapid response and in infrequent service situations customers need to feel a close relationship with the service provider (reduce ambiguity).

Fifth, a long-term orientation means according to Bond et al. (1987) "*the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective (fostering virtues like perseverance and thrift) rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view*" (p.361). In a long-term orientation type of culture the relationships are based on durability, loyalty, responsiveness and affinity which is reflected on the relationships with service providers, hence, assurance and tangibles will be less important as it will be for short-term orientation.

As a matter of fact, these dimensions are important for organizations because it will give them a hint on how to adapt their services to their customers in order to gain customer satisfaction. However, customer satisfaction has no specific type of measurement but it exists two types of approaches. The first one is about the expectations that a customer has regarding a product or service performance and experience. It is about what the customer is waiting for and the result he will obtain at the end, after the purchase (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al.1996). The second approach is based only on the one-time purchase evaluation. (Oliver, 1997).

Furthermore, according to Laroche et al (2004) "*cultural differences must be taken into account in the study of measurement of service quality and satisfaction*", (p.7).

As a result, firms work to conquer their customers' loyalty which is according to Oliver (1997) "*a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product consistently in the future situational influences and marketing efforts that might cause switching behavior*", (p. 356). In effect, the reputation and the image of the company will have an influence on this loyalty. Moreover, in order to create a positive brand image it is crucial to take into account the personnel's attitudes, behavior and activities (i.e. culture). The elements to improve customer satisfaction are the following:

- Reputation:

A good image creates a stronger link with the customer service quality and one of the key for that is the employees' treat towards the customer.

- Problem solving skills:

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The employees need to use their multi-skills like their capacity to analyze, search and chose the right solutions for customers' problems.

- Communication (verbal and non-verbal):

According to Harris (2007) "*Communication is the process by which information, ideas, and understanding are shared between two or more people*" (p.357). Swartzlander, (2004); Jones and Keppler, (2008) said that verbal communications skills include "*words, a set of symbols, grammar, the rules for combining words, politeness, being positive, using names and titles, and business etiquette*", (p.357). The employee has to transmit to the customer that he is being heard, that his questions are respected and be friendly discussing problems. For the non-verbal communication Swartzlander (2004) said that "*it is everything except words, such as employees' ability to understand body language, movements and cues, personality, and customers' dress, facial expressions, and showing sincerity in serving the customer service skills customer*", (p.358). Actually, two-thirds of a message is nonverbal and one-third is verbal.

- Culture skills:

In an organization, every person has the responsibility for satisfying or not its customers which is why a customer oriented corporate culture (set of beliefs, values and actions) is more than necessary. The employees should have, according to Deshpande et al. (1993) "*a set of values and beliefs that are likely to consistently reinforce and pervade the customer focus across the organization*" (p.358). Therefore, their behavior will be altering by trends, values, lives, culture which will also influence the relationship with the personnel and the customers. The objective is to make the client feel like a member more than a common customer.

Therefore, the table below shows some examples regarding fast-food restaurants' services in different countries.



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Table 4 - A Selection of empirical work dealing with fast-food restaurants

(Source: Wen, Qin, Prybutok, and Blankson, 2012)

Study	Factors and research findings	Methodology
Lee and Ulgado (1997)	Significant differences of customers' expectations and perceptions of FFR service quality, food price, service time, and location between the United States and South Korea.	Survey data collected from the United States and South Korea. Analysis with regression
Brady, Robertson, and Cronin (2001)	Service quality affects behavior intentions through satisfaction in both North America and Latin America. Service value affects behavior intentions in North America but not in Latin America, which means American consumers are more value conscious than Latin American.	Survey data collected from North America and Latin America. Analysis with SEM in LISREL
Law, Hui, and Zhao (2004)	Waiting time, staff attitude, environment, seat availability, and food quality influence return frequency; waiting time, staff attitude, food quality and food variety affect customer satisfaction.	Survey data collected from Hong Kong, analysis with GLM in STATISTICA
Keillor, Hult, and Kandemir (2004)	Service encounter including physical good quality, service quality, and servicescape positively influence behavioral intentions.	Survey data collected from eight countries, analysis using SEM in LISREL
Qin and Prybutok (2008)	Service quality with five dimensions affects behavior intentions directly. Food quality and price/value are found to be significant factors on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.	Survey data collected from the United States Analysis with SEM in LISREL
Ryu, Han, and Jang (2010)	Hedonic and utilitarian values significantly affect customer satisfaction that additionally has strong influence on behavioral intentions.	Survey data collected from United States. Analysis with SEM in AMOS

Those examples of real life show how different anything can be perceived depending on the culture, on the country or city a person was born and grew up or lives. As Laroche et al. (2004) mentioned: “*national culture are patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that are rooted in common values and societal conventions*” (p.11).

People that come from an individualistic culture will explore and communicate depending on their internal feeling on the contrary, Confucian culture (collectivistic) has two essential social influences which are the group conformity pressure and the concept of face. (Laroche et al, 2004).

Furthermore, there are four types of classified services:

- Service factory: like airlines, hotels, resorts, trucking and recreation, where a low labor intensity and a low customer interaction/customization prevails.
- Service shop: there is low labor intensity and a high customer interaction/customization like in hospitals, restaurants excluding fast food, auto and other repairs services.
- Mass service: has high labor intensity and a low customer interaction/customization, for example in: commercial banking, retailing, schools and wholesaling.

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- Professional service: such as law firms, accounting firms and medical clinics, it exists a high labor intensity and a high customer interaction/customization. (Schmenner, 1986).

Also, the ten dimensions of service quality explained here under will have an example between developed (individualism) and developing countries (collectivism) in order to illustrate the importance and impact of culture. For instance, the United States is the most individualistic on the west on the contrary, China is the opposite on the East region. In effect, according to Hofstede (1991) *“developing countries are characterized by collectivist culture and where India and Philippines score 21st and 31st respectively for individualism while the USA is ranked 1<sup>st</sup>”* (p. 263).

According to Malhotra et al (1994) there are ten dimensions of service quality:

- Reliability:

The service has to be achieved delicately and flawlessly as Berry et al (1990) said: *“service reliability is the service “core” to most customers and managers should use every opportunity to build a “do-it-right-first” attitude”* (p.260). For instance, in developed countries are focused on the technology (high tech) whereas developing countries are more “high touch” (emphasis on personnel). Moreover, there is a difference between developing countries that choose a “merely good” service which provides a defect free service due to high costs and developed countries that choose “breakthrough” service that as Heskett et al. (1990) said, *“revolutionizes an entire industry's rules of the game by setting up new standards for consistently meeting or exceeding customers' service needs and expectations”* (p.261).

In developed countries if a company wants to maintain a customer with high expectations and low tolerance, it has to improve the service quality by planning strategies regarding customer's expectation, evaluation of the service process and retention on the contrary, in developing countries customer are not that exigent and are used to inefficient services which is why their zone of tolerance is more extensive (Walker and Baker, 2000).

- Access:

Thanks to the evolution of technology developed countries have more impersonal contact through electronic devices (telephone) but this revolution has not been implemented everywhere and in developing countries the personal contact is crucial to improve accessibility.

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- Understand the customer:

According to Berry and Parasuraman, (1991) and Gwinner et al, (1998) there are three levels of relationship marketing, the first one is built on financial incentives (price discounts), the second level is based on learning customer wants and needs (personalized relationship) and the third one is to strengthen this relationship between structural and psychological connections to and social and economic ones. Therefore, developing countries promote their competitiveness practically just with money motivation (population with low incomes) whereas in developed countries focus on higher level of customized relationships (how the customer uses and derives benefits from the service).

- Responsiveness:

Time is limited and rare resource in developed economies which is those customers give greater value on time in contrast with developing countries. Also, according to Berry et al, (2002): “*the term saving time in fact implies reallocating time across activities to achieve greater efficiency*” (p.263).

- Competence:

An organization needs to spread its knowledge and skills through the whole personnel in order to keep up with its competitors. Furthermore in developing countries, the competence and abilities of the employee is dominated by the organization as a whole as Hofstede (1991) said “*an employer never hires just a person, but rather a person who belongs to an in-group*”. On the contrary in developed economies the competence and trust relies on the individual's reliability and dependability (Conway and Swift, 2000). A crucial cultural factor that reinforces this preview fact is power distance because in collectivist societies there is a large power distance which has a negative influence on individualism. In effect, within a company there are unequal roles, power and skills between the employees depending on their level. Therefore, customer cannot communicate with employees at the top of the hierarchy. This situation is not the same for individualism cultures (a small power distance) (Hofstede, 1980).

- Courtesy:

The respect of others is perceived differently in a collectivist culture where people feel identified with group's beliefs, rules and peace/balance which is not the case for individualistic culture because people are focus on their privacy, liberty and experiences.

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- Communication:

It is often explicit, direct, and unambiguous in developed countries where they use central processing information which is the opposite for developing countries where intelligent customers have to deal with poor information data which make them use peripheral processing.

- Credibility:

Thanks to the fact that a service is intangible, it is hard for the customer to believe in it a hundred percent. Therefore, a positive reputation or image of a firm is essential to transmit a good corporate credibility. In collectivistic cultures, the credibility of a company is based on tradition unlike individualistic culture that depends on performance standards.

- Security:

In rich economies the security is focused on the emotions (higher order need of self-esteem) whereas in developing societies it is more about the physical security (lower order need that has not been yet accomplished).

- Tangibility:

According to Parasuraman et al., (1985) *“it is the physical evidence of the service, consisting of physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools or equipments, physical presentation of the service, and other customers in the service facility”* (p.266). There is a satisfaction when a service fulfills its promises with a standard performance in developing economies as Triandis (1995) said: *“customer are highly functional in their choice criteria partly due to personality factors that are in turn shaped by higher-level influences such as values, meanings, culture, and philosophy of life”* (p.266). Although in rich societies, customers expect to receive more than the basic characteristics of the service which are linked to intangibles benefits.

Lovelock and Yip (1996) defines three types of services here below:

- People-processing: are concrete actions given to customers in person which is why a segmentation is needed in order to adjust the services to local cultures.
- Possession-processing: are concrete actions to physical objects.
- Information-based: collection, manipulation, interpretation and transmission of data to create value.

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As Cadotte et al., (1987) and Oliver (1997) said “*customer satisfaction with a service encounter is an emotional state experienced in response to an evaluation of their service experience*” (p.161). Thus, customer satisfaction is one of the keys for the success of a company because they are the ones promoting their positive experiences (word of mouth) and buying repetitively its products/ services. On the contrary if customers are not satisfied they will have a worse influence, rejecting the firm and giving bad feedbacks about it. This is why organization pays great attention to it and realized that culture had a big influence on it.

As Triandis (1994) stated, perceived culture distance is “*the extent to which two cultures are perceived differently from each other and is a result of differences in various cultural elements such as language, religion, social structure, and values*” (p. 160).

Furthermore, there are two types of service encounters which are the intercultural where the service employee and the customer have a different culture and the intracultural that is the opposite. According to Solomon et al. (1985) if there is an intracultural encounter: “*employee and customer are more likely to have a common script and shared expectations about appropriate role behaviors, hence the likelihood of coordinated actions and satisfactory outcome is high*” (p.159). Moreover if there is an intercultural encounter the probability for the expectations and perceptions to be different are higher because they arise from distinct cultures. According to Sizoo et al. (2005) : “*these mismatched "roles" and "scripts" can cause conflicts and misunderstandings during a service encounter, and may result in unhappy customers, frustrated employees, and loss of business*” (p.160). Nevertheless, it does not mean that intercultural encounters’ customer perceptions are worse than intracultural ones.

In effect, there are cultural differences all over the world which has an impact on the service evaluation since a customer from Japan do not have the same culture as one from the United State and a customer from Korea will not have the same perceptions about the performance of a service employee as will have US one. Asians prefer more personalized services (face to face) compared to Westerners that will expect a more tangible results (Mattila, 1999).

That is to say that any human being will feel identified with a service employee that will have the same culture or similar one because there is a special communication, trust and familiarity. Then, it is possible that the nationality of a service provider will be more relevant than any other aspects. For instance, a person decides to choose an airline company to travel because it has similarities with him/her.

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According to Hopkins et al. (2005): “*cultural attribution is defined as assigning the cause of an unsatisfactory outcome to the cultural differences between a service employee and a customer*” (p.161). Hence, it exists a zone of tolerance where customers adapt to heterogeneity because is a fact that a customer perception will vary depending on cultural background, cross-cultural knowledge and/or personal experience. Therefore, the higher is the knowledge and the acceptance of cultures, the more the person is willing to adjust to it.

In addition, challenges will always appear in intercultural encounters by default and the most common one is the language barrier. For example, if someone is in a country where there is not a habit or culture of gluten free food and this person goes to a restaurant and asked for a gluten free meal in that specific country, it may happen that the server will not understand what this person is asking for.

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## 4. Empirical part

### 1) Introduction of the empirical part

Empirical research is the recompilation of information by the direct or indirect observation. It is usually divided by two types: (1) the quantitative research based on using numeric data and statistics, (2) the qualitative research uses non numerical data such as narrative text or interviews. Qualitative research are used to obtain new and deep information about a specific phenomenon that is unknown. In order to start a qualitative study the researcher needs motivation to observe and to better understand people and the social context in which they live. It refers to meanings, concepts, symbols, descriptions, characteristics and metaphors. However, quantitative research uses counts and measurement which is why it is more accurate, rigorous, reliable and therefore, used. Moreover, choosing one or the other will depend on the nature of the study but the most important is to triangulate all the collected information in order to analyze it correctly (Goodman, 2011).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) *“qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self”* (p. 3). The researcher is the “bricoleur” (De Certeau, 1984) which means the ‘poetic making do’ and there are many types like interpretative, narrative, political or theoretical. Thus, the phenomenon interpretation will be influenced by methods, strategies, techniques of representation and other factors. The researcher knows that it is impossible not to take into account its own perspective. Furthermore, the analysis of the information also depends on the questions asked, on the context or even on the population chosen. There are several methods to recollect data in a qualitative research such as the participant observation (be part and observe the user environment), the focus group (a selected group of people that come together to talk about a specific topic) or one to one interview (two people talking about specific questions or issues). The interviews can be standardized, semi structured and unstructured. Also, there are the case studies (both qualitative and quantitative data), exploring stories and narratives (verbal storytelling) and unobtrusive methods (do not need participants). There are three types of qualitative genres: ethnographic (a focus on society and culture), phenomenological approach (a focus on individual lived experience) and sociolinguistic approach (focus on talk and text) (Goodman, 2011).

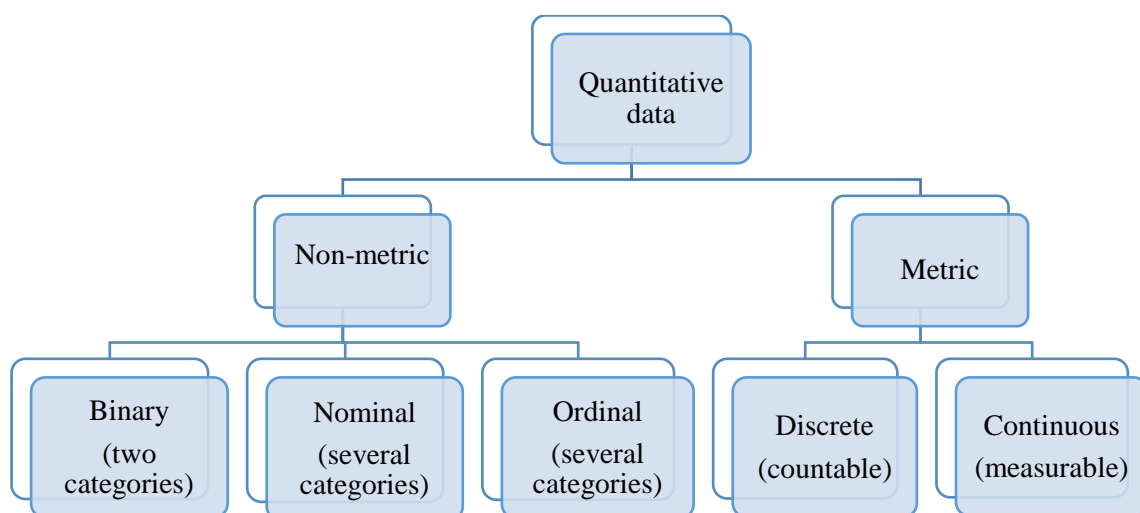
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Quantitative research is based on measures from counting and/or scaling that are used to express quantity. In addition, counting comes naturally, it is straightforward and easy and scaling is about ranging a property from a great deal to very little or none and its helps to compare things in a standardized way. In quantitative research the main purpose is to determine the relationship between an independent variable and another set of dependent or outcome variables in a population. Measurement is the process that turns the data into numbers and assigns numbers to things, people, events and others which helps the researchers make comparisons. This data is information about the world and the researcher creates a structure in form of numbers in order to analyze it (Punch, 2005).

In effect, the variables or values that are being analyzed are divided in three groups. First, the dependent variable or outcome variable is the one that can be modified and predicted through the research. Second, the independent variable or explanatory one that clarifies any changes in response of the variable of interest. Third, the extraneous variable that does not belong within the study but might have an impact on the results of it. The quantitative research recollects numerical data that comes from a process of measure and on which basic mathematical operations can be done. This data is divided in two: non-metric that does not have a meter with which distance between scales values can be measured and on the contrary, metric data that can define distances between scales values.

*Figure 1- Classification of data types:*

*(Source: Singh, 2007)*





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The methods of data analysis can be descriptive statistics that are used to describe, summarize or explain data and can be inferential statistics that makes inferences from the samples about the population from which they have been peaked (estimation or testing difference of means). Therefore, the descriptive method is divided in three analyses: univariate, bivariate and multivariate. The univariate one studies the characteristics or distributions of a single variable of interest and measures of central tendency. The bivariate one shows how a variable affects the other (positive, negative or neutral). Thanks to a bivariate cross-tabulation (two way table), is possible to investigate frequencies of observations that belong to specific categories on more than one variable. Hence, the nature of the variables is important for the analysis and coefficient of association. The multivariate analysis is about the relationship of three or more variables simultaneously (Singh, 2007).

The quantitative research has the purpose of developing theories and/or hypotheses related to a studied topic. In this case, several hypotheses will be delivered from a quantitative research with an online survey. In effect, is going to allow the recollection of a bigger number of responses from a population of interest to measure the incidence of different point of views and opinions regarding the topic: the impact of cultures on customer service. In addition, closed and open questions will be asked with the survey in order to narrow the results into one specific purpose. Moreover, with the first part of the thesis we already have a global comprehension about the subject which is why we will use a survey to complement it with real life perceptions and experiences. Therefore, the final data that will appear in form of tabulations or others will be analyzed in order to confirm or deny the hypotheses. Moreover, a multivariable survey will help obtain a wide range of information and with some conceptual framework of independent, control and dependent variables. The questionnaire will pursue factual information which is background and biographical information, knowledge and behavioral information as well as the measure of attitudes, values, opinions and beliefs. It provides a distinction between cognitive, affective and behavioral information. The researcher needs to stay in control of the data collection procedure rather than leave it to others or to chance (Punch, 2005).

In this case, the questionnaire is going to be an indirect and structured with 15 questions. It has to be reliable and completed by half of the respondents in order to yield more information. It will start with general questions and be followed with specific ones. There will be binary options at the beginning in order to narrow the sample that we are looking for. Also, since we are not doing a direct observation it is necessary to have scale items. According to DeVellis

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(2003) “*a scale is intended to reflect the latent variable because it is latent rather than manifest and the construct is variable rather than constant*” (p.14). Is that said, the latent variable is the real value that is of interest: the impact of cultures on customer service. A scale is a correct estimation tool since several items may seize the essence of such variable with more exactitude than a single one could not obtain. In effect, the scale is supposed to evaluate its true significance at the time and place of measurement for each person measured. Which is why in this questionnaire six questions are made with scale in order to be more precise, with a range from 1 (bad) to 5 (excellent) or 1 (totally agree) and 5 (totally disagree). Moreover, the respondents might be tired starting the second half of the survey. Therefore, the correlation between halves will be lower because of the questions order not because of their quality. Thus, the hardest questions will be asked in the middle of the questionnaire and at the end we will have the classified questions regarding the sample. Another important element is the vocabulary used to build the questions because either words or entire sentences can be source of ambiguity and have more than one meaning. Hence, the questionnaire is going to be written with clear and simple words in order for the respondents to understand it perfectly. As well as changes in the positive or negative state of an item can confuse the respondents. Then, in each one of the questions we will clarify in details how we want the person to answer. Therefore, in order to present an accurate questionnaire it is necessary to have respondents that are briefed about the objective and the context of the research confidentiality and anonymity of the information they are providing. They need to be reached in a professional way and within limits. There are two kind of sampling: the population which is the target group (subject) about whom something will be said and the sample which the actual group that is comprised in the research and from whom the data is compiled (DeVellis, 2003).

The main objective will be to observe and analyze how a sample perceives customer service in France and/or in the United States. The reason why we are choosing those two countries is because of their specific differences: location, culture, official language and business system. These elements are the ones that we are looking to get more information about with the questionnaire. Also, I have acquired knowledge about this topic thanks to several experiences in those two countries. Thus, it makes it easier to establish a survey with the right questions and with the right sample. Moreover, will be focus on a sample that has been in contact with customer service and more precisely in a sample that has for sure been in contact with customer service in France and in USA. In this case, our convenient sample will be composed of 30 people from my entourage such as my business school colleagues that have travelled quite a lot and should have made an encounter with customer service in those two countries. I will find

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this convenient sample in my entourage through one of the most effective tools, the internet with an online survey. Furthermore, the sample will be for both sex, from the age of 18 years old until 61 and more years old (divided into categories), with any type of nationality and occupancy. The gender of a person will help determine if there is a difference between a men and a women perception regarding the expectations of customer service. The age will give an idea if those perceptions change depending from which period of time the person grew up in. The nationality is essential since culture is the main characteristic here and will help determine if depending on the culture, people have distinct point of view.

## 2) Hypotheses:

Based on the theory that I read, presented above and the framework of my study, I would like to do a quantitative research about the impact of cultures on customer service in France and/or in the Unites States. Therefore, five hypotheses have been proposed and will be analyzed thanks to the data that will be recollected with the questionnaire made. These will be confirmed or deny depending on the results that we will gathered at the end of the study. We will use H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 as a reference to avoid writing the whole sentence each time we want to talk about one of the hypotheses.

H1: The culture of the country where a company is based influences its customer service.

H2: French customer service is perceived as different as the American one by customers.

H3: French service is perceived as different as the American one by customers.

H4: It is possible that companies might adapt their customer service depending on the country where they are located.

H5: The gender has an influence in the perception of customer service and the service.

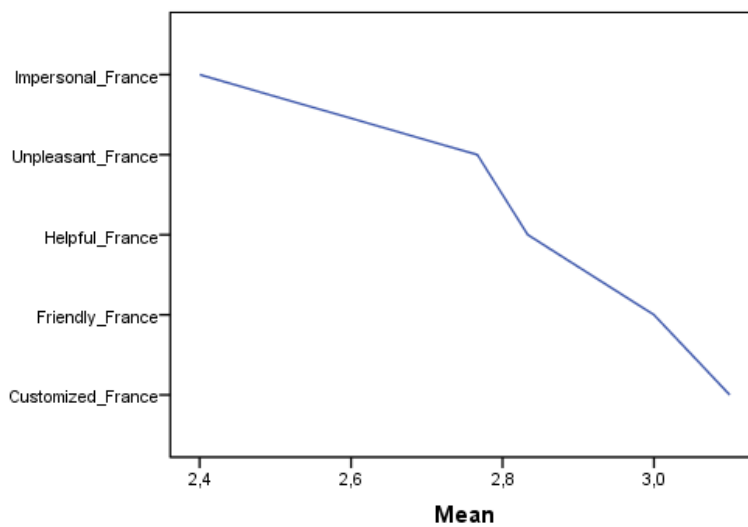
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### 3) Results

The results of question 1 confirm that all the people from the survey had an experience with the French customer service and the American one as we see in the results of question 3. This is the convenient sample and everyone responded yes in order to fulfill the rest of the questionnaire.

Figure 1- Question 2: Please choose the characteristics that the customer service in France has?

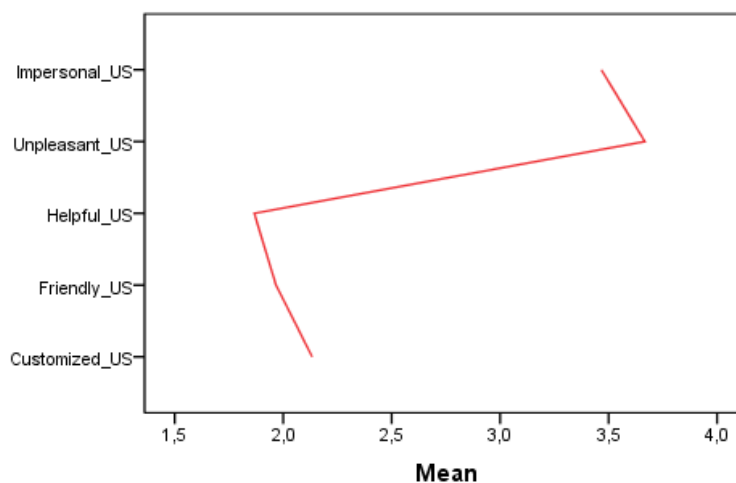
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



In this graphic we can see how five characteristics: customized, friendly, helpful, unpleasant and impersonal have been classified in a scale: totally agree, agree, neutral, disagree and totally disagree. Those characteristics describe the customer service in France. The sample in general agreed that the customer service in France is not customized, not friendly, is helpful, unpleasant and impersonal.

Figure 2- Question 4: Please choose the characteristics that customer service in USA has?

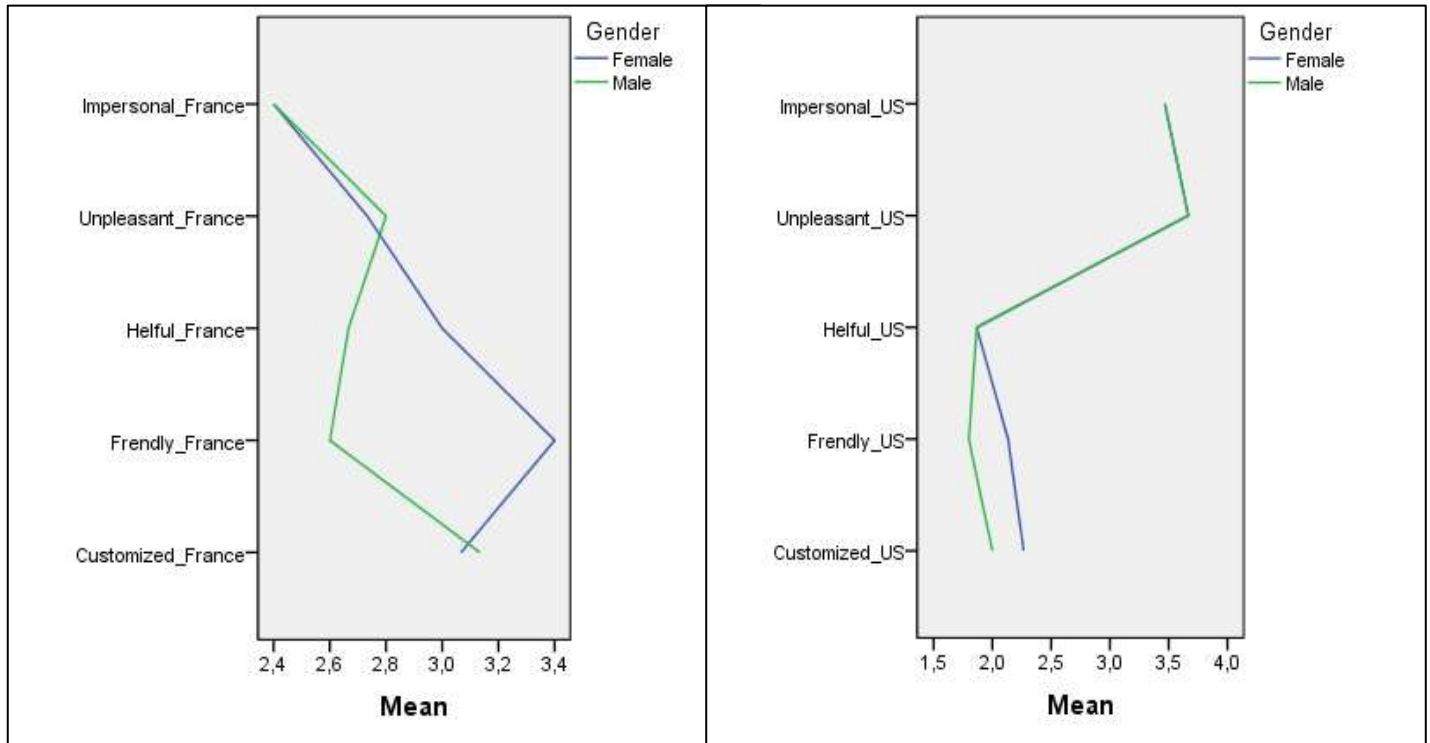
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



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This graphic describes the different types of characteristics in the American customer service which are: customized, friendly, helpful, unpleasant and impersonal. Most of the sample agreed that in the United States the customer service is customized, friendly, and helpful and mostly disagree that it is unpleasant and impersonal.

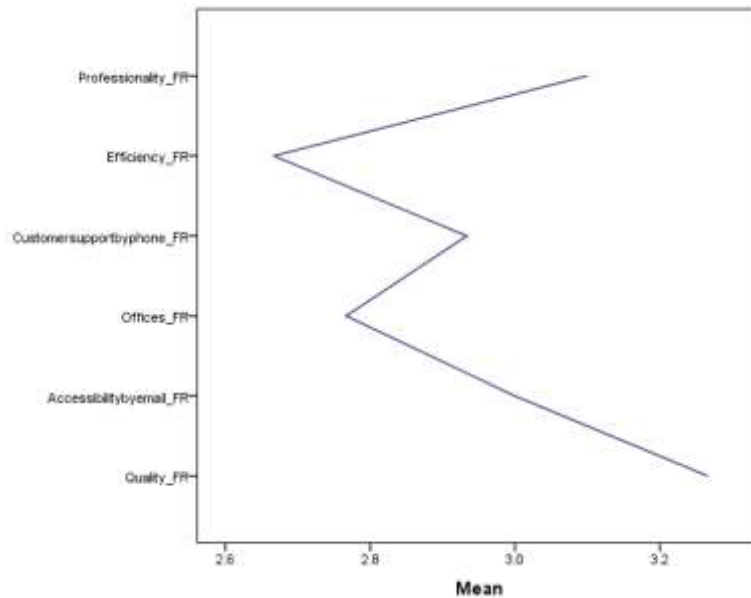
Figure 3: Characteristics of customer service in France and USA by Gender



Those two graphics show how men and women perceive the characteristics of customer service in France and in the United States. The curves in the first graphic (France) has more differences than the curves in the second graphic (USA). It seems that males and females have more similar ideas regarding the customer service in USA.

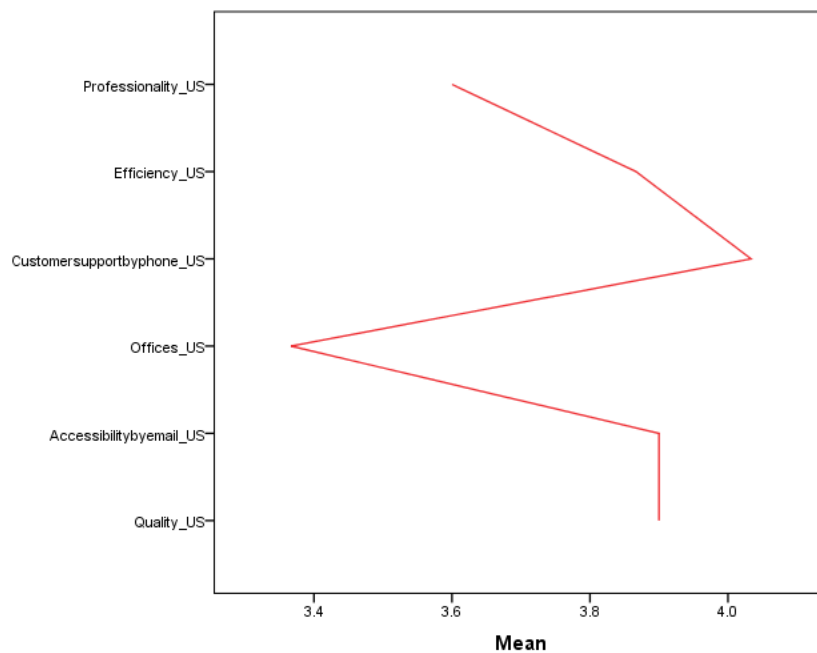
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*Figure 4- Question 5: Please range the service in France:  
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)*



This graphic illustrates several elements of the service in France that have been rated by the sample. Most of the respondents said that the quality is good, the accessibility by email is normal (nor good or bad), the offices are bad, the customer support by phone is bad, the efficiency is bad and professionalism of the service in France is good.

*Figure 5- Question 6: Please range the service in the United States:  
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)*



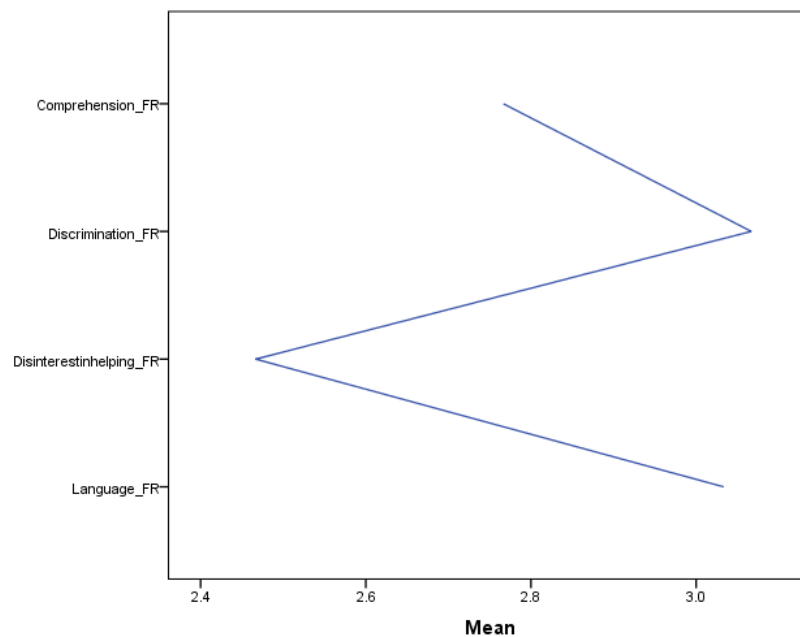
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This graphic suggests that most of the sample considers that there is a good professionalism from the employees in the service offered in the United States. That there is a good quality, a good accessibility by email, a good customer service by phone, good offices and good efficiency.

Moreover, two graphics (see in appendix) have been made with the results of the service in France and in the United States separated into gender. In the first one the curves of male and female are quite alike except for one element (professionalism in France) and in the second one the curves of male and female follow the same ideas but men are more extreme than women (USA).

*Figure 6- Question 7: Please rate the possible obstacles that you have faced with customer service in France:*

*(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)*

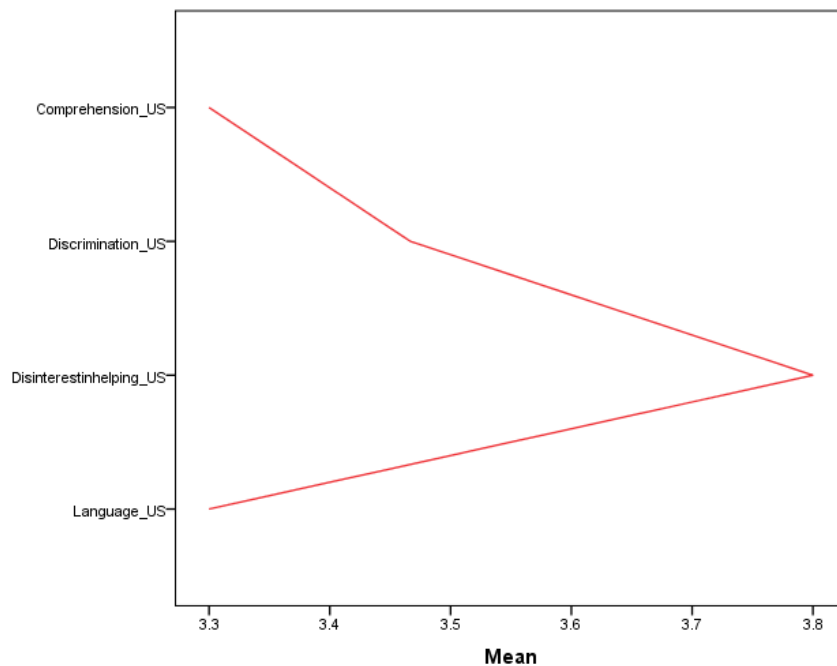


In this graphic we can observe the obstacles that the sample could find with customer service in France. Within these 30 people, mostly agreed that they did not have a problem with the language, had a problem with the disinterest in helping, they stayed neutral regarding discrimination and that they had a problem with the comprehension.

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Figure 7- Question 8: Please rate the possible obstacles that you have faced with customer service in USA:

(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



This graphic shows the opinions of the sample regarding the obstacles of customer service in the United States. Most of the respondents did not have a problem of comprehension with the customer service in USA. They are neutral regarding the discrimination; they disagree with the fact that there is a disinterest in helping and a problem with the language.

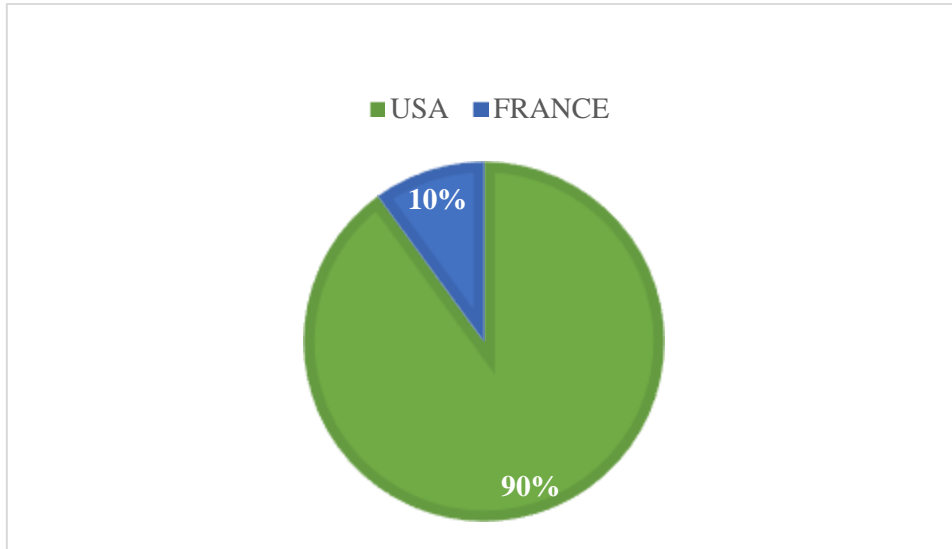
In addition, the information recollected with this question has been separated in gender into two graphics (see appendix). It looks like male and female have not had the same experience with obstacles faced with the customer service in France since the curves follow the same path but for some characteristics they are located apart. In the case of the USA it is the same, men and women are on the same page for two over four components.



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Figure 8- Question 9: What customer service do you find more welcoming?

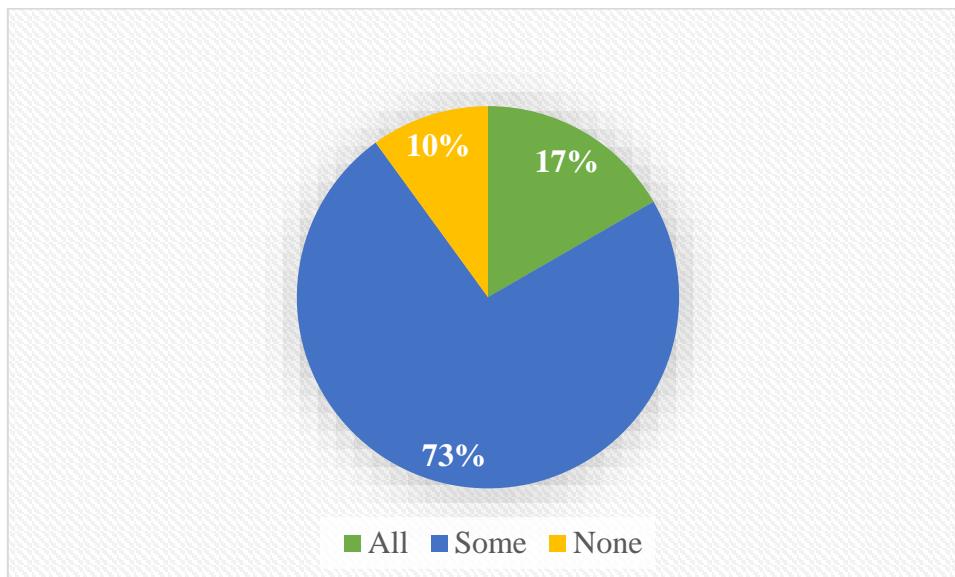
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



The chart shows that 90% of the sample finds the American customer service more welcoming than the French; however, 10% says the contrary.

Figure 9- Question 10: Do you think companies adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?

(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)

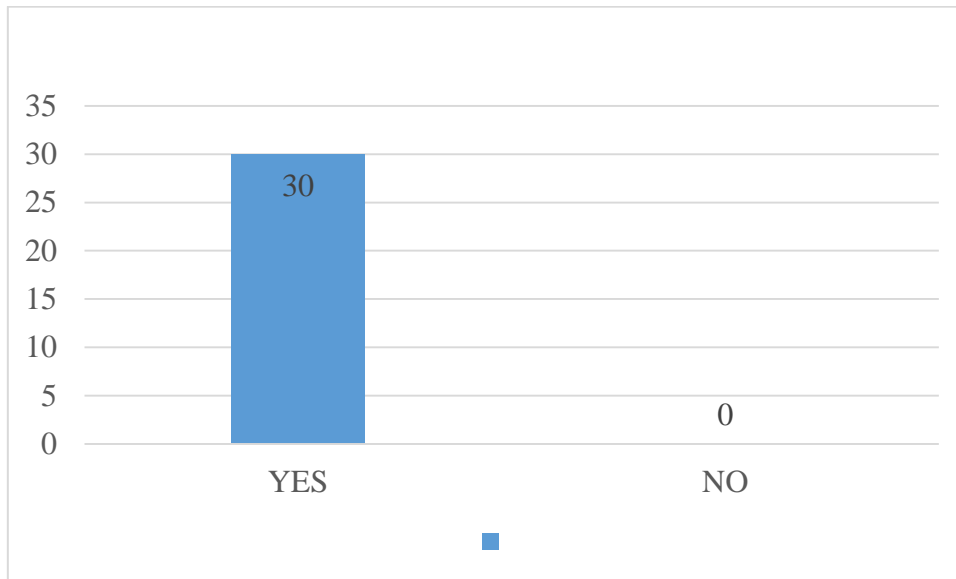


In this chart 73% of the sample responded that some of the companies adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provided their services. Nevertheless, 17% agreed that all of them do it; on the contrary, 10% think that none of them do it.

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Figure 10- Question 11: Do you think it is necessary for companies to adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?

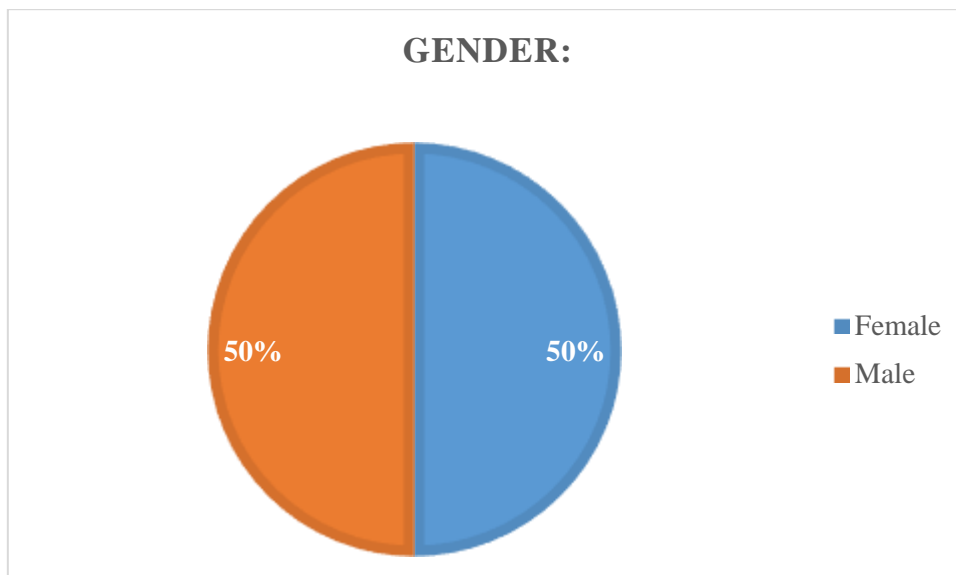
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



In this chart 100% of the sample agreed that it is necessary for companies to adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services.

Figure 11- Question 12: Gender

(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)

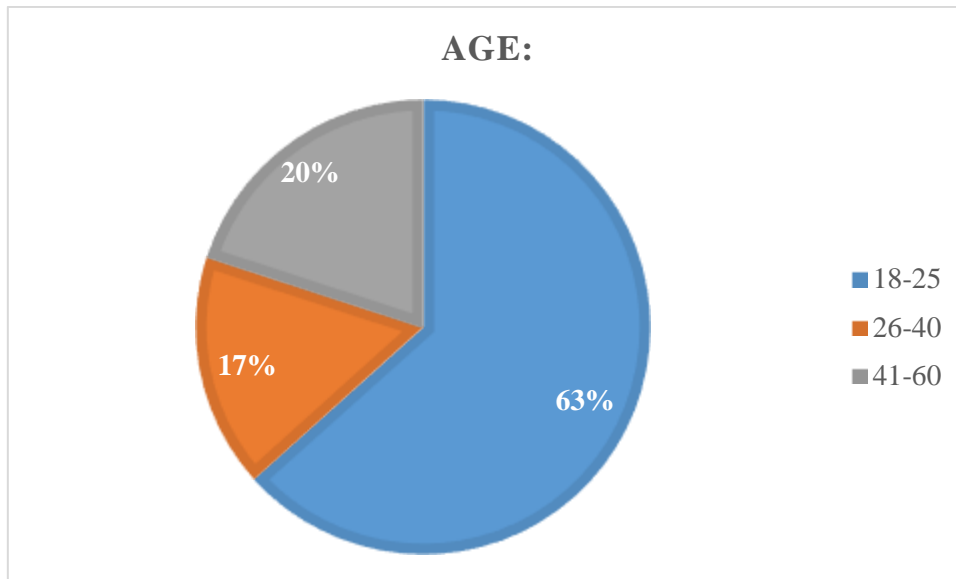


This chart represents the gender of the sample of the questionnaire. In this case there are 50% of women and 50% of men.

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Figure 12- Question 13: Age

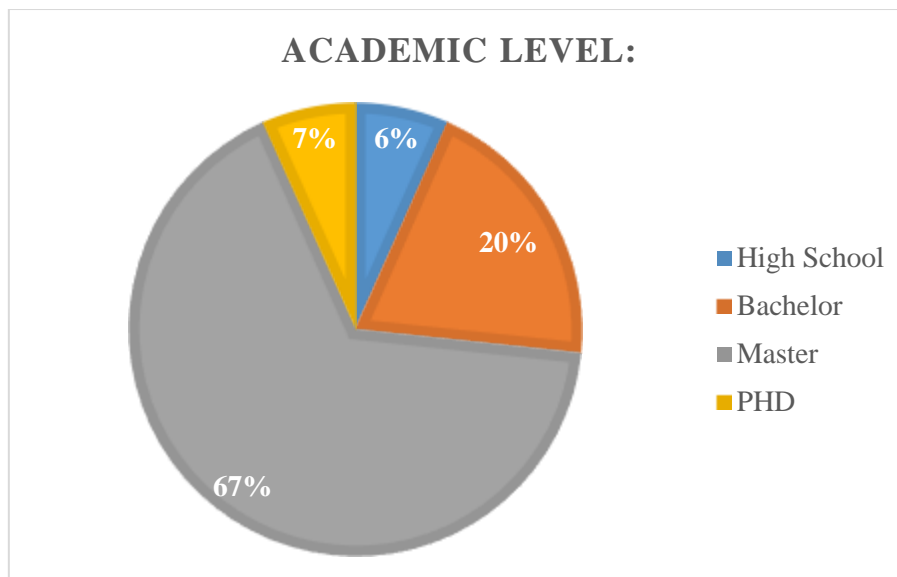
(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



The total of respondents is equal to 30 people who 63% are from an age range between 18-25 years old, 17% between 26-40 years old and 20% between 41-60 years old.

Figure 13 - Question 14: Academic Level

(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)

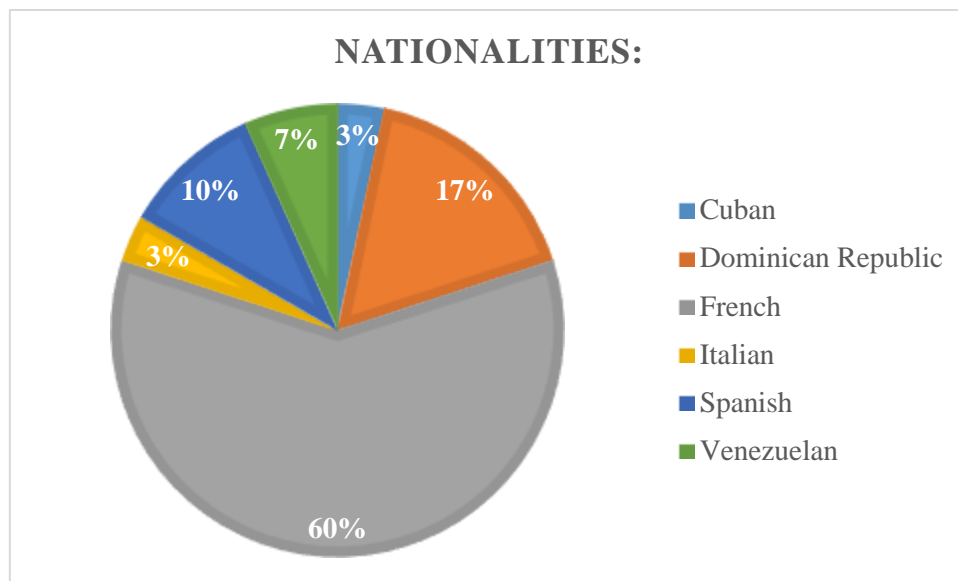


In this sample we have 6% people with a high school diploma, 20% with a bachelor degree, 67% with a master and 7% with a PHD.

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Figure 14- Question 15: Nationality

(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)



In this chart we have 60% of the sample that is French, 17% of Dominican, 10% of Spanish, 7% of Venezuelan, 3% of Cuban and 3% of Cuban.

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Figure 15- Cross tabulation of the more welcoming service and the academic level

**Welcoming \* Academic\_Level Crosstabulation**

			Academic_Level				Total
			High School	Bachelor	Master	PHD	
Welcoming	FR	Count	0	1	3	0	4
		Expected Count	,3	,8	2,7	,3	4,0
	US	Count	2	5	17	2	26
		Expected Count	1,7	5,2	17,3	1,7	26,0
Total		Count	2	6	20	2	30
		Expected Count	2,0	6,0	20,0	2,0	30,0

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,721 <sup>a</sup>	3	,868
Likelihood Ratio	1,245	3	,742
Linear-by-Linear Association	,003	1	,959
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 6 cells (75,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,27.

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,155	,868
	Cramer's V	,155	,868
	Contingency Coefficient	,153	,868
N of Valid Cases		30	

In this case the two-sided *asymptotic significance* chi-square statistic is higher than  $0.10 < 0.868$  which is safe to say that the differences are due to chance variation, which implies that question 9 (Which customer service is more welcoming?) is not related with the academic level of the people.

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Figure 16: Cross tabulation of the results if companies adapt to culture and the academic level

			Academic_Level				Total
			High School	Bachelor	Master	PHD	
Companies_adapt	All of them	Count	0	0	5	0	5
		Expected Count	,3	1,0	3,3	,3	5,0
	some of them	Count	2	4	13	2	21
		Expected Count	1,4	4,2	14,0	1,4	21,0
	None of them	Count	0	2	2	0	4
		Expected Count	,3	,8	2,7	,3	4,0
Total		Count	2	6	20	2	30
		Expected Count	2,0	6,0	20,0	2,0	30,0

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,595 <sup>a</sup>	6	,470
Likelihood Ratio	7,105	6	,311
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,198	1	,274
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 11 cells (91,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,27.

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,595 <sup>a</sup>	6	,470
Likelihood Ratio	7,105	6	,311
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,198	1	,274
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 11 cells (91,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,27.

The two-sided *asymptotic significance* of the chi-square statistic is higher than 0.10 > 0.470 which means that the differences are due to chance variation and question 10 (Do you think companies adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?) is not related with the academic level of the people.

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Figure 17: Cross tabulation of the results if companies should adapt to culture and the academic level

**Companies\_shouldadapt \* Academic\_Level Crosstabulation**

			Academic_Level				Total
			High School	Bachelor	Master	PHD	
Companies_shouldadapt	yes	Count	2	6	20	1	29
		Expected					
		Count	1,9	5,8	19,3	1,9	29,0
	no	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected					
		Count	,1	,2	,7	,1	1,0
Total		Count	2	6	20	2	30
		Expected					
		Count	2,0	6,0	20,0	2,0	30,0

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14,483 <sup>a</sup>	3	,002
Likelihood Ratio	5,996	3	,112
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,471	1	,062
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 6 cells (75,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,07.

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,695	,002
	Cramer's V	,695	,002
	Contingency Coefficient	,571	,002
N of Valid Cases		30	

The two-sided *asymptotic significance* of the chi-square statistic is lower than  $0.10 < 0.002$  which means that the discrepancies are not due to chance variation and question 11 (Do you think companies should adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?) is related with the academic level of the people.

Furthermore, the two-sided *asymptotic significance* of the chi-square statistic for the cross tabulation of gender with question 9 is higher than  $0.10 > 0.283$ , the cross tabulation of gender with question 10, the two-sided *asymptotic significance* of the chi-square statistic is higher than  $0.10 > 0.328$  and for cross tabulation of gender with question 11, the two-sided *asymptotic significance* of the chi-square statistic is higher than  $0.10 > 0.309$  which means that the discrepancies are due to chance variation and it is not related with the academic level of the people (see in appendix).

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#### 4) Analysis

In this part the hypotheses are going to be accepted or denied thanks to the data survey analysis:

H1: The culture of the country where a company is based influences its customer service.

H2: French customer service is perceived as different as the American one by customers.

H3: French service is perceived as different as the American one by customers.

H4: It is possible that companies might adapt their customer service depending on the country where they are located.

H5: The gender has an influence in the perception of customer service and the service.

This survey was created in order to recollect actual point of view from a specific sample. In effect, the questions are asked to 30 people in this case and each one of them has a purpose to our topic: the impact of culture on customer service.

In the first and third question, a 100% of the sample responded yes which is quite predictable because we were looking for people that had already an encounter with customer service in France and in the United States. There is nothing new about those results, it is just to narrow the answers of the questionnaire in order to reduce the error margin and obtain a better data.

The Multiple line charts presented, the profile charts providing the mean of the variables allow the comparison of the different items, as well as, the comparison of different groups of interest for the same mean profile of the variables. It is useful for describing the results of experiments for describing multiple variables, all of which are measured on the same scale. In this work, see Figure 1, for the second question on demonstrate how 30 people perceive the characteristics of customer service in France: the mean value for the customization of the service is around 3.0, the friendly of the service is between 2.8 and 3.0; when considering the helpfulness it is between 2.6 and 2.8, being unpleasant is less than 2.6 and when questioned about the impersonal of the service in France the mean value of the variable is 2.4, in a 1 up to 5 Likert scale. This means that overall taking into account those attributes the perception of customer service in France is negative. Nevertheless, the results are quite different when it is about the United States as we can observe in Figure 2. The sample perceived the characteristics of customer service in USA: the mean value for customized, friendly and helpful is around 2 and for unpleasant and impersonal is around 3.5, in a 1 up to 5 Likert scale. Comparing these two questions, we start observing that the sample has more a positive point of view regarding customer service in USA. It is also true that a lot of respondents are quite neutral which is why more questions are made in order to increase the information about the subject. H2 is accepted



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with these previous results since the sample clearly voted for a difference between customer service in France and in the United States.

Moreover, regarding the service in general in France in Figure 4, the mean value for quality is more than 3.2, for the accessibility by email is 3.0, less than 2.8 for the offices and nearly 3.0 for customer support by phone. Also, when considering the efficiency it is a bit more than 2.6 and more than 3.0 for professionalism in a 1 up to 5 Likert scale. Hence, it will depend on which type of service a respondent had contact with and how was his experience. Therefore, globally there is a good quality of service in France but most of the elements that compose it are not satisfying enough which means that they could be improved. Moreover, with the American service (Figure 5) the mean value for quality, accessibility by email, customer service by phone and efficiency is more than 3.8. However, offices are less than 3.4 and professionalism is 3.6 in a 1 up to 5 Likert scale. Thus, the items chose to describe the service in both countries are much better graded in USA because the sample received an ameliorated service than in France. H3 is asserted in a more general point of view since the respondents are giving their point of view about the service in French companies and in American ones. It confirms the theory since the United States' service productivity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is stronger than Europe which means stronger than France.

Furthermore, regarding obstacles that could be detected with the customer service in France in Figure 6, the mean value of language and discrimination is more than 3.0, regarding the disinterest in helping is more than 2.4 and less than 2.8 for the comprehension in a 1 up to 5 Likert scale. Those issues are related to the previous results obtained because we can observe in general how people had complications with the comprehension of the employees and their disinterest in helping the customer in France. We could say that a poor attitude is shown by the personnel of service companies. The curve is reserved for the obstacles of customer service in the United States (Figure 7) since the value of the mean for language and discrimination is less than 3.3, more than 3.8 for the disinterest in helping and more than 3.4 for the discrimination in a 1 up to 5 Likert scale. In effect, this proves again that USA is much better at providing customer service than in France. H2 is reinforced with questions 7 and 8 since the sample declared that customer service in USA is even better than the one in France. In addition, another important result is the one where 90% of the sample believes that the customer service in the United States is more welcoming than the one in France. The respondents feel that USA is a country where the customer comes first and companies prove their interest towards their wants

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and needs. H3 is reasserted by a significant part of the sample and the same results are persistent and USA service stands out from the French one.

With globalization there has been a change on how the businesses proceed to sell all around the world which is why and we can observe how most of the sample (73%) chose to respond that some of the companies adapt their customer service depending on the country where they provide that service. Only 17% said that they always do it and 10% that none of them adapt. H1 is confirmed in this case since the respondents agreed that companies need to adapt to the culture of the country where they are located. Thus, culture has an influence in their customer service since they need to prepare their personnel to the new rules, values, beliefs and other aspects of their new type of target. As that said, it is clear that in order to have a way in the market companies need to adapt and a 100% of the sample acknowledged that it is necessary for organizations to adjust which affirms H4.

Furthermore, with the graphics in the appendix we can say that regarding the customer service in France, the answers of men and women are quite similar, they agreed that it is impersonal, unpleasant and customized but for the other characteristics they have an opposite opinion. Nevertheless, is not the case with the United States where the curves are correlated. About the service in France the curve is quite correlated except for the professionalism where more than 3.4 of the males' mean though it is good but 2.8 of the women's mean though is not. For the American service the curves follow the same trend however, the male one goes more for the limits compared to the women one. The obstacles encountered in France seem to be the same for both men and women except for the disinterest in helping where less than 2.2 of the female mean agreed that there is a strong disinterest in helping whereas less than 2.8 of the male mean is more neutral about it. Regarding the obstacles in the United States, men and female agreed with the language and disinterest in helping but not with the discrimination and comprehension. Finally H5 it is also confirmed since men and women are completely different and perceived each encounter with customer service and service in France and in USA differently even though there are some similarities. The majority of men and women agreed that the American customer service and service is much better than in France which gives us the same result as all the other answers.

This questionnaire finishes with sociodemographic questions and the first one is the gender in order to know how many male and female responded to the questionnaire. The sample is over 30 and in this case it is balanced because 15 female responded to the survey as much as the male that are also 15. There is a majority of people that are aged from 18 to 25 years old (63% of the sample), 17% of the sample is from 26-40 years old and 20% from 41- 60 years old. The

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majority of the sample has a master which means they have done minimum 4 years of studies (67%), then 20% have a bachelor, 6% a high school diploma and 7% has a PHD. Even though not all the respondents went to college, all of them are educated. As for the nationalities, most of the sample is French (60%) and we have clearly a preference for the American service and customer service which means that the respondents have been objective. Then, 17% of the sample is from Dominican Republic, 10% are Spanish, 7% Venezuelan, 3% Italian and 3% Cuban.

Finally, question 11 and the academic level of the sample is related as is it shows in the graphics above (the two-sided *asymptotic significance* of the chi-square statistic is lower than  $0.10 < 0.002$ ). This could mean that depending on the level of studies it influences the knowledge that people might have about this question and the vision they have about the future. It is possible that some have studied a topic related to the question and is more confident about it.

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## 5. Conclusion

The evolution of the service industry has been noticeable around the world. The United States has been the first one to use all the technological evolution in order to provide more and better customer service. Globalization has spread the “American way of life” all over the planet but has also given the possibility to other cultures to impose themselves, making multinationals adapt to them. There is indeed a difference between a service and a customer service even though they are linked. Nowadays, businesses service are present everywhere and it is a fact that in order to provide an international service and customer-service, it has to be adjust to each type of customer in order to succeed. Hence, the customer has become the priority because it is their needs and wants that companies want to fulfill. Culture is anchored in people’s life, it is defined by beliefs, values, rules, habits, languages which creates one specific type of individual. Therefore, it is hard to put everyone in the same place but it is easier. Globalization has tried to make us all the same nevertheless, when people travel and experience a change of culture, they realized that culture will never go away. Firms know that even though they want to sell a standardize service, they will need to adapt depending on the country or city they are providing it: “think local, act global”.

The empirical part clearly illustrates the superiority of the American service over the French one which is related in the end with the culture in general. In effect, the theory and the practice matches and the information recollected is in big (numbers of industry report) and small scale (questionnaire of 30 people). In the United States, the customer service is crucial for the businesses service because in their culture the customer is the key to profit. The first sentence you will hear when you need something in the United States is: how may I help you whereas in France it is a simple Hello which is not the same approach. It is possible that in the United States a customer might buy a service or a product that he/she did not want or need but was convinced by the customer service. However, the results of the questionnaire are a small part of the reality which does not represent all the population. In addition, service is mention in general but if we divide it into specific type of services, the results might be different. To conclude, there is an impact of cultures on customer service because it is offered by humans that are influenced by their own culture which is why companies are also influenced by customer’s cultures. The globalization and social consciousness push the different cultures to be embrace by companies in order to improve their customer service, marketing and worldwide communication. Therefore, customers appropriate their brands as individuals not as mass consumers.

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## 7. Annexes

### 1) Questionnaire

1. Have you had any encounter with a customer service in France?

- YES  
 NO

2. If the answer is YES: Please choose the characteristics that the customer service in France has?

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Totally disagree</b>
<b>Customized</b>					
<b>Friendly</b>					
<b>Helpful</b>					
<b>Unpleasant</b>					
<b>Impersonal</b>					

3. Have you had any encounter with a customer service in the United States?

- YES  
 NO

4. IF the answer is YES: Please choose the characteristics that customer service in USA has?

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Totally disagree</b>
<b>Customized</b>					



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<b>Friendly</b>					
<b>Helpful</b>					
<b>Unpleasant</b>					
<b>Impersonal</b>					

5. Please range the service in France:

FRANCE	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Really bad</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Nor good or bad</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Quality</b>					
<b>Accessibility by email</b>					
<b>Offices</b>					
<b>Customer support by phone</b>					
<b>Efficiency (fast)</b>					
<b>Professionalism (qualified employees)</b>					

6. Please range the service in USA:

USA	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Really bad</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Nor good or bad</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Quality</b>					
<b>Accessibility by email</b>					
<b>Offices</b>					
<b>Customer support by phone</b>					

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<b>Efficiency (fast)</b>					
<b>Professionality (qualified employees)</b>					

7. Please rate the possible obstacles that you have faced with customer service in France:

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Totally disagree</b>
<b>Language (communication)</b>					
<b>Disinterest in helping</b>					
<b>Discrimination</b>					
<b>Comprehension</b>					

8. Please rate the possible obstacles that you have faced with customer service in France:

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Totally disagree</b>
<b>Language (communication)</b>					
<b>Disinterest in helping</b>					
<b>Discrimination</b>					
<b>Comprehension</b>					

9. What customer service do you find more welcoming?

- France
- USA

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10. Do you think companies adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?

- All of them adapt
- Some of them adapt
- None of them adapt

11. Do you think it is necessary for companies to adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?

- YES
- NO

12. Gender:

- Male
- Female

13. Nationality: .....

14. Age:

- 18-25 years old
- 26-40 years old
- 41-60 years old
- 61+

15. Academic level:

- High school
- Bachelor
- Master
- PHD

Your knowledge and time to fill this questionnaire it is much appreciated. Thanks again.

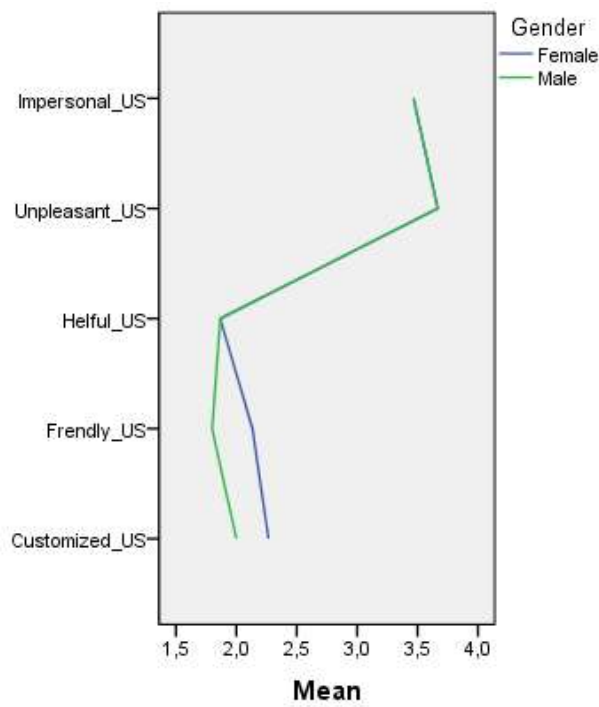
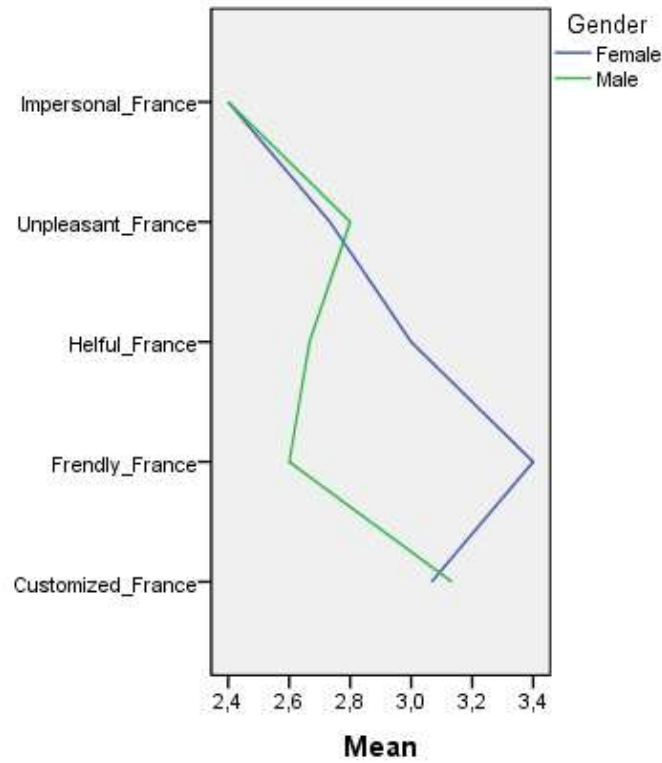
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## 2) Graphics

Graphics used to analyze hypothesis H5:

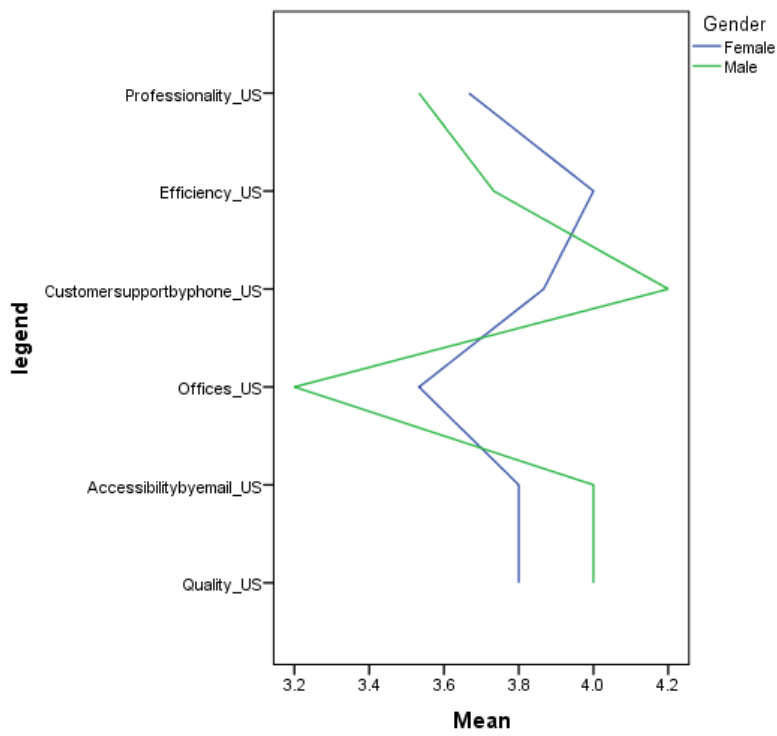
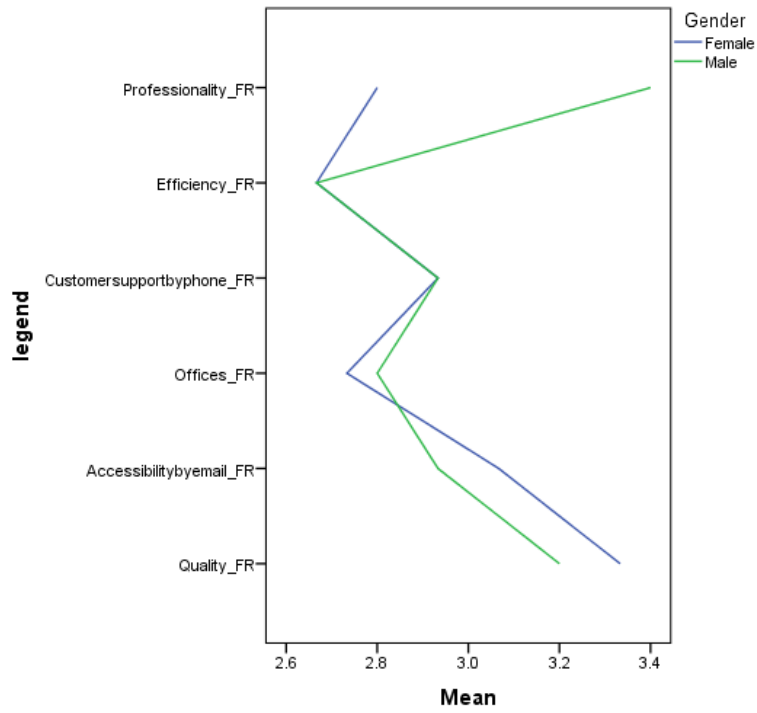
*(Source: Own elaboration based on data collected in the survey)*

Customer Service (questions 3 and 4) cross tabulated with gender:



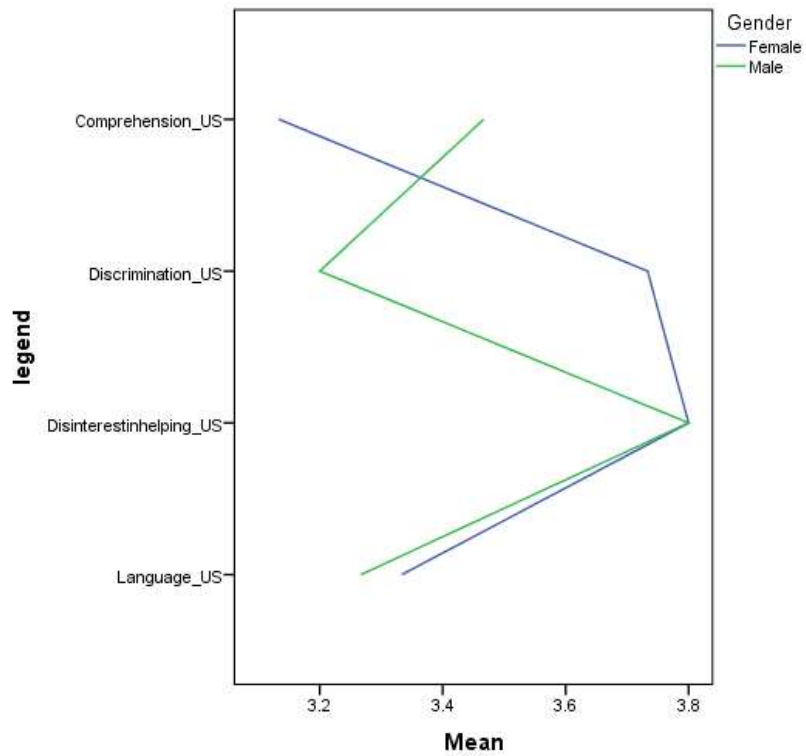
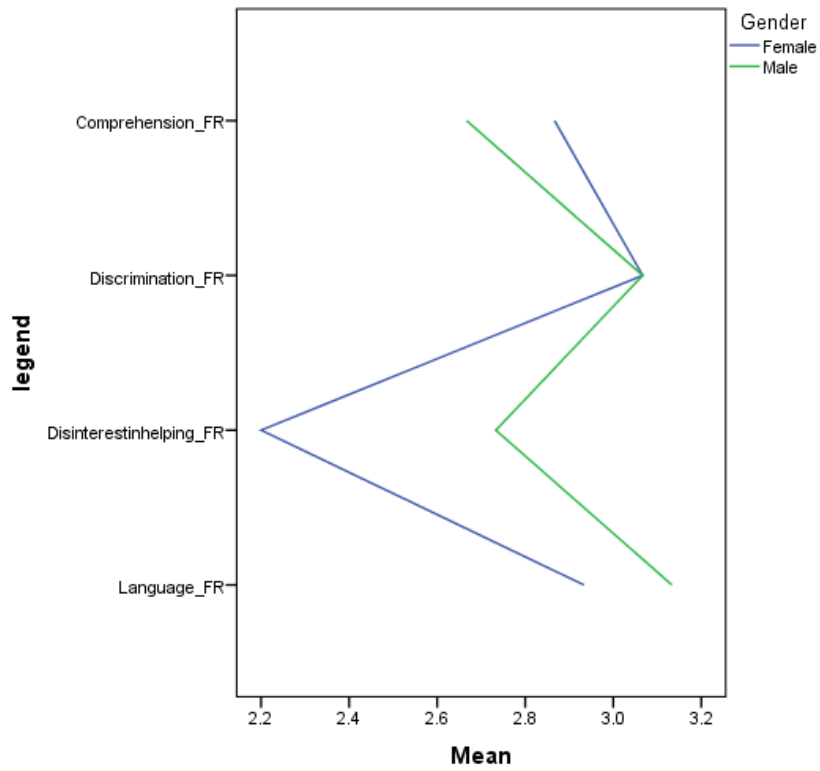
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Service (questions 5 and 6) cross tabulated with gender:



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Obstacles (questions 7 and 8) cross tabulated with gender:



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Cross tabulation of gender with question 9 (What customer service do you find more welcoming?):

**Welcoming \* Gender Crosstabulation**

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Welcoming	FR	Count	3	1	4
		Expected Count	2.0	2.0	4.0
	US	Count	12	14	26
		Expected Count	13.0	13.0	26.0
Total		Count	15	15	30
		Expected Count	15.0	15.0	30.0

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.154 <sup>a</sup>	1	.283		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.288	1	.591		
Likelihood Ratio	1.200	1	.273	.598	.299
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.115	1	.291		
N of Valid Cases	30				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.196	.283
	Cramer's V	.196	.283
	Contingency Coefficient	.192	.283
N of Valid Cases		30	

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Cross tabulation of gender with question 10 (Do you think companies adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?):

**Companies\_adapt \* Gender Crosstabulation**

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Companies_adapt	All of them	Count	4	1	5
		Expected Count	2.5	2.5	5.0
	some of them	Count	9	12	21
		Expected Count	10.5	10.5	21.0
	None of them	Count	2	2	4
		Expected Count	2.0	2.0	4.0
Total	Count	15	15	30	
	Expected Count	15.0	15.0	30.0	
	Count				

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.229 <sup>a</sup>	2	.328
Likelihood Ratio	2.357	2	.308
Linear-by-Linear Association	.970	1	.325
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.00.

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.273	.328
	Cramer's V	.273	.328
	Contingency Coefficient	.263	.328
N of Valid Cases		30	



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Cross tabulation of gender with question 11 (Do you think it is necessary for companies to adapt their customer service depending on the culture where they provide their services?):

**Companies\_shouldadapt \* Gender Crosstabulation**

		Gender		Total	
		Female	Male		
Companies_shouldadapt	yes	Count	14	15	29
		Expected Count	14.5	14.5	29.0
	no	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
Total	Count	15	15	30	
	Expected Count	15.0	15.0	30.0	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.034 <sup>a</sup>	1	.309	1.000	.500
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	1.421	1	.233		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.500
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.000	1	.317		
N of Valid Cases	30				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by	Phi	-.186	.309
Nominal	Cramer's V	.186	.309
	Contingency Coefficient	.183	.309
N of Valid Cases		30	